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A YEAR'S SINGING  
AND OTHER POEMS  
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Amelia Antia Gary

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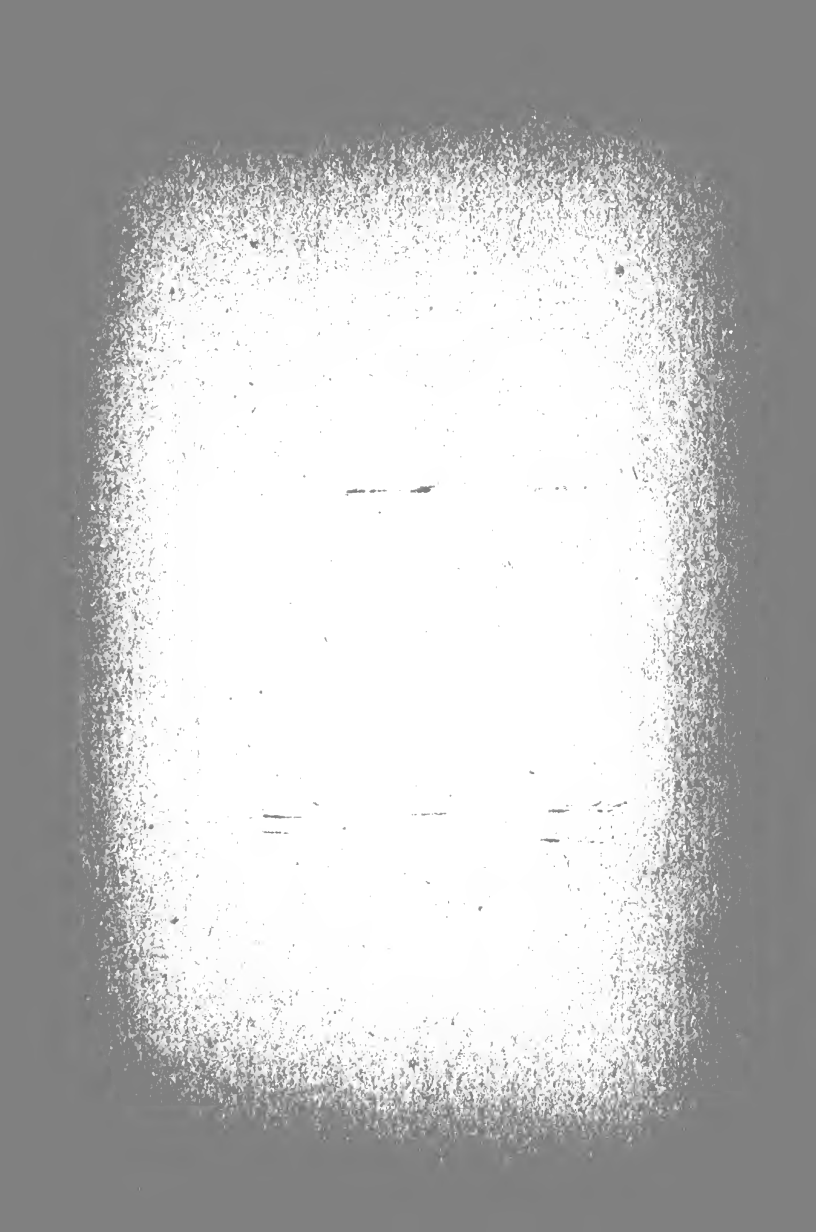
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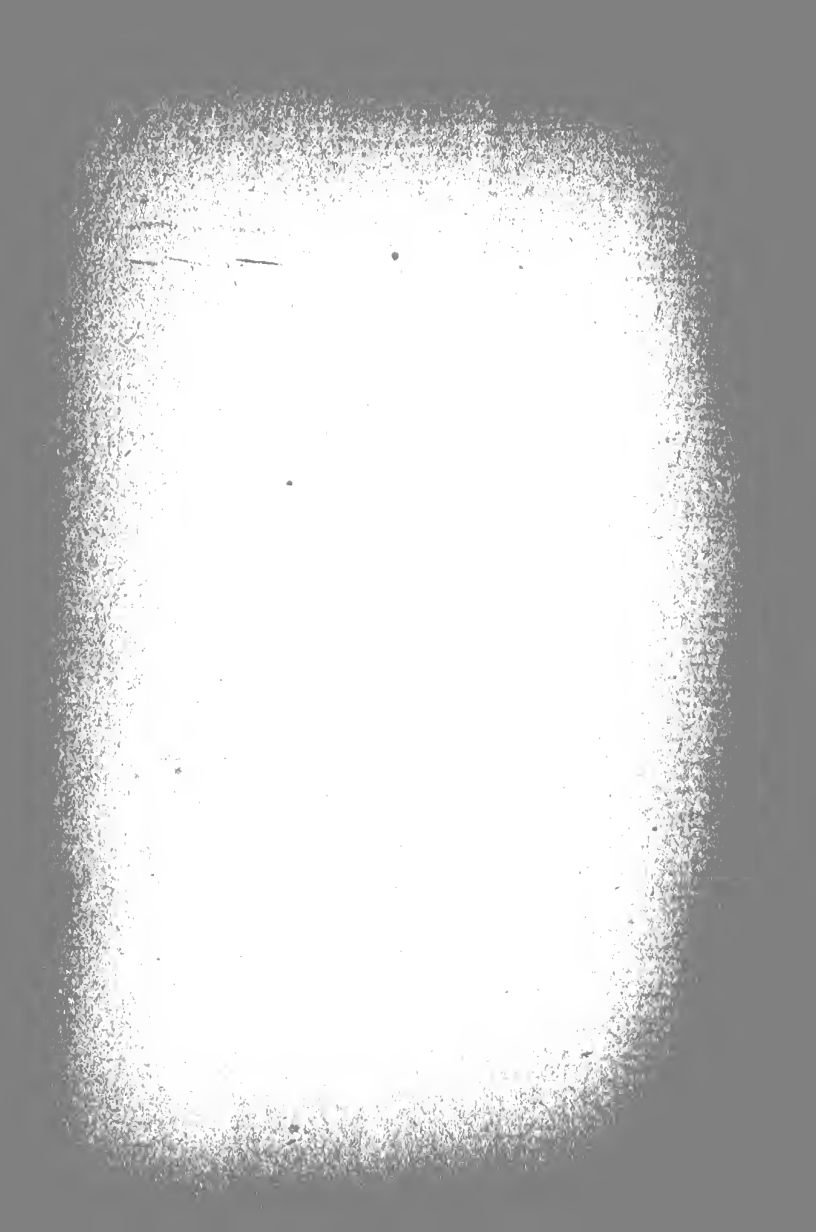
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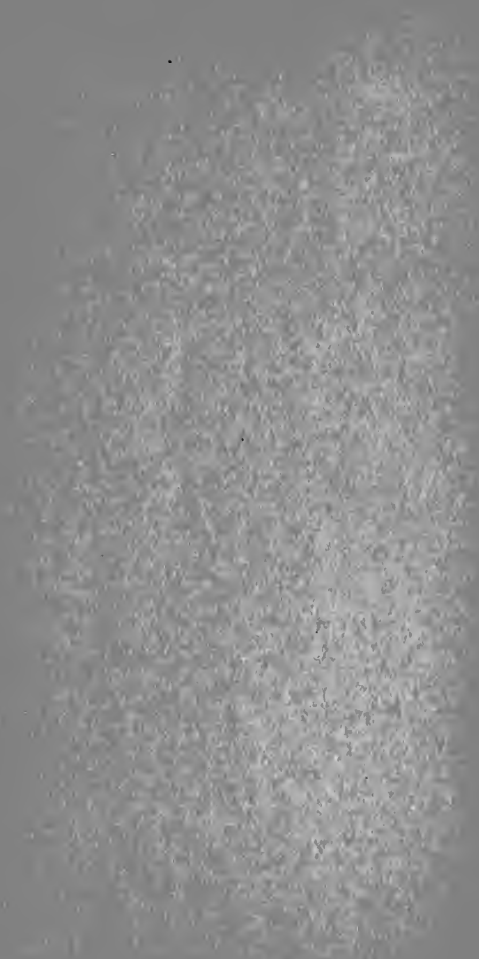
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1895

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.











Anstiss Leontiss Gary

A YEAR'S SINGING

—AND—

OTHER POEMS.



—BY—

ANSTISS CURTISS GARY.

Author of "One Question."

BRENTANO'S

204-206 WABASH AVENUE, CHICAGO.

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DEDICATION.

To the Spirit of Song—the breath of
whose enkindling bloweth where it listeth—
these faint echoes of its passing are reverently dedicated.

And if I write of love, who will hear me?
For the world is full of lovers busied with
their own affairs. And aught else than
love to write of I know not, for I knew
naught else while the folly lasted.

ON THE NATURE OF LOVE.

A PARABLE.

THERE once lived a man the desire of whose heart was to find Love: and he sought long and earnestly and asked help of many, who could not help him, but only hindered him in his pursuit.

Now this man had spent his youth and had entered upon middle age when a strange thing happened to him.

He met a woman whom he wooed, as he wooed all sweet and beautiful and unwon forms which he hoped might satisfy his desire for a spiritual and individual identification of his own with another nature.

And the woman was gracious unto him and he did not tire of her as he had always tired of every one who yielded to his demand for love. For, though charming and tender and necessary to him, he could not gain the power over her spirit, which, when gained, rendered each nature which he could control valueless, because no longer stimulating to his search.

One day, while he was musing upon Love and his failure in winning this woman entirely to himself—for he had never failed in all his life before to receive the affection he demanded but could not return—he looked earnestly upon her, and as he looked he recognized the face of a woman who had loved him in his youth. And he cried to her, “How is it that you are still young, while I have left my youth behind me in my searching?” She answered, “I am young because I found Love in my youth and am identified with it, and henceforth I can know no change. The mystery of the human heart is clear to me, for the hope that is of youth brings to the heart the

knowledge of Love, and Love and God are one and indestructible."

And he said, "O my early sweetheart! who has taught you these truths?" And she smiled upon him and answered, "You, my lover!" Then he asked her, "How could I teach you what I did not know myself, what I have been asking others to teach me all my life?"

She answered him, "You have sought Love these many years and have not found it because you have thought others must bring it to you. You have not looked in the one place where Love can be found,—your own heart. There only is the fire kindled that shines back reflected from others' eyes; there only dwells that you have sought in the outer and visible universe and thought to find imprisoned in other forms. As you give of your life do you receive knowledge of the law of love that guides and binds the universe."

Then the man hid his face and wept and said, "While I have kindled the flames of passion and regret and yearning in many hearts, yet have I now no power to create

the flame of love, that seeking not its own is satisfied to be of God." And he went sorrowfully on his way, while the woman who had loved him in his youth wept also for a little time—though she saw clearly through her tears that the disappearing of the symbol was within the thought of God—because the wonder and the awe of it seemed more than she could bear.

Prologue.

SHE.

L O the cry
Of heart's joy when Love was
strong!
Heart's despair, Love proven wrong.
Let men judge our lives as seen
Lines between.

HE.

Thy command
And my answer, sweet, they go
Side by side, that all may know
What may be known and expressed
Of Life's best.

SHE.

Is it one,
This that we have known, one strength?
Do two souls e'er reach at length
Equalness, Love's wonder, through
Being two ?

This, Love's cup,
I have drained it till no thirst
Now proves equal to the first:
Tasting likewise proves its sweet
Incomplete.

HE.

Which loved more,
You who wandered, I who stood
Watching vanish Life's best good?
Useless question for us two,
I, or you?

When we failed
Our own lives to understand,
Though we stood once hand in hand,
Think you stranger's eyes can reach
Beyond speech?

You and I,
With our lives' marred texture wrought
In the garments of our thought,
May not be thus judged, indeed,
While men read.

“Whom do you love, my darling?
Whom do you love best?” “You.”
“I have loved once and often.
I have been false and true.
Whom do you love then, dear one?
Whom do you love best?” “You.”

“Whom should you fear most, sweetheart,
If any fear should grow
Where your great love dwells steadfast
In your heart’s stronghold?” “Lo
Only myself, O Lover!
If the heart failed me so.”

MORNING.

God help me to forget—was said.

God help me to forget

The day we parted, and, alas!

The day when first we met;

And I can bear life's daily care

Thus lightened from regret.

EVENING.

God help me to recall—was said.

God help me to recall

The days when Love and thou wert one,

And one was all in all!

And I can live although I grieve

At that which did befall.

A Year's Singing.

She.

"Woman's pleasure, woman's pain—
Nature made them blinder motions bounded
in a shallower brain."

FRUITION.

ON my forehead is placed the crown
Worn for ages by all who knew
Sweet from bitter and false from true.
Poet, they call me, folding down
The poet's mantle above the brown,
Dull, woman's robe that would fain show
through.

While I stand wondering what was heard
In my verses to make them dear
Unto a listening people's ear;
What the charm that their pulses stirred.
Mine was no World's song. Every word
Told one thing only, that Love is here.

Love has come, I sang, loud or low;
Love is here on the earth again;
Love that vanished away from men
Winters and summers, and years ago.
Love is here in the paths we know.
Love shall comfort us now as then.

Songs of everything 'neath the sun,
Poets have written, glad and free,
Tales of the ancient chivalry,
Peace and war; and the World's "Well done!"
Followed their fancies one by one,
Echoed in praise of their melody.

But I have written of Love alone,
From quiet places where we did meet,
Through moonlight's glamor and sunset's
fleet;
Somewhat uttered, of rapture shown,
Something told that the heart has known,
Of Love's wonderment, incomplete.

That is all, not enough to claim
Poet's honors—my lips would shrink,
The cup's sacrament some must drink
Ere entitled to bear such name.
Love is waiting me then, not Fame,
Whatsoever the people think.

THE QUERY.

WHAT would you give me if you came,
 Lover, for whom I have no name?
What could you offer to satisfy
This want eternal, whose center I?
Would you give to life or destroy its grace,
If we stood acknowledged once, face to
 face?

Love, I know, and His might that drives
Low contentment from out our lives.
Would I be wiser if I saw
The spirit's form in the letter's law?
Would I be happier if I heard
In mortal accents Love's strange new word?

Would you prove the reason that never
 came
For the lack of gold in the sunset's flame?
Would you be enough? Could you make
 quite clear
My life's unreason without you, dear?
O soul unknown, held awhile by fate!
Do I want or dread you? The risk is
 great!

I am myself. If you came and proved
All that ever in man was loved
Could I lose that selfhood in finding you?
O give me, Lover, an answer true!
To lose were bitter, to gain were all,
The answer waits, yet I dare not call.

SOLUTION.

I THOUGHT that I should not find you,
I thought you were yet to be,
Or had been and had not waited
For your other selfhood, me.
I thought all thoughts, save the false one
That you did not need me more
Than any wonderful living
You might know or had known before;
Than all that the worlds might offer,
Such thought was, I felt, untrue,
That you did not need me and want me,
As I missed and wanted you.

I thought of all that might happen,
Or had happened since God sent
Us forth as His thought-perfected,
In one grand spirit blent,
Before the descent into matter,
Before the Fall and the Curse
Parted and drove us seeking
For each through the Universe.
O mine in the black of the midnight!
Mine in the glare of the sun,
Mine, all mine in the spirit,
One, aye, very one!

Mine, as in the Beginning,
 Mine, when Time's laws shall cease,
Mine, through all meeting, parting,
 Sure that the end is peace!
Face after face I looked into
 To find the one I knew;
Voice after voice I hearkened,
 Nor caught the echo true.
Heart after heart I questioned,
 The answer each failed to give;
Nor ever a moment doubted
 That true heart's love did live.

For I was certain, Belovèd,
 You would not prove untrue,
When once through the misty darkness
 My arms encircled you.
This could not be, I knew surely,
 Through the sore mistakes I made,
As I met and trusted in shadows,
 By each in turn betrayed.
O Lover, my Lover, O Lover mine!
 I knew by the false that the true must be,
 I knew, while longing, your need of me
Somewhere in God's Divine!

And so I sang to you, sweetheart,
Through the hours of the day:
Sang while the East glowed brightly,
Sang when the skies were gray.
Sang as the lark sings, gaily,
Rising to meet the sun
Before the answering glory
Stilleth the orison.
Sang when the soul mists darkened
Sang while I nothing heard,
Until one day was the silence
Thrilled by your answering word.

Then I remembered slowly,
Hearing your voice again,
All the length of the journey,
All the yearning and pain:
All the lives we had wasted,
Searching creation through,
Since the fiat was sounded,
Parting me, love, from you.
O Lover, loved of the spirit,
And never in earth-form found,
Lo now is broken the circle
Of our lives' unceasing round!

Now God be praised for all effort!

I praise God for His grace!

That here while yet in the body

I look upon your face.

Aye, here and now in life's turmoil

Doth all my soul rejoice,

To hear Love's "new name" uttered

Belovèd, by thy voice!

Never again to journey!

The soul's release is shown,

When through the darkness of matter

Love comes unto his own.

AT MEETING.

O LOVE, my love! the tender words that
rise

From heart to faltering lips at this surprise,
This sudden joy at standing where thou
art,

Do tremble into stillness most complete,
And are not missed, nor needed, in the sweet,
Strong silence that enfolds us heart to
heart.

O Love, my strength! because of coming days,
I fain would turn to one great song of praise
Each voiceless sorrow of the vanished
years.

What now avails life's former pain or bliss
Since, swift or slow, the moments led to this?
And, near thy heart, mine hath no room
for fears.

REVELATION.

UNTIL I loved thee, dear, I did but know
 In part God's love for us; but now
 there is

No wonder in me at the sacrifice
 Through which He sought such tenderness
 to show.

All past bewilderments, all questions low
 On life, or death, or immortality,
 Are solvèd now forever more for me,
 Through this new Revelation's awful glow.

My own! my love! there has been nothing
 done

By God or man I would not do to make
 Complete thy being: naught I would not
 take

Upon my heart, if so through thine might
 run

The life-blood lightened from griefs that
 would prove—

Borne in thy stead—no longer griefs to
 love.

THE LOVE LETTER.

WHEN first upon my eager sight did glow
 Thy love-words, O Belovèd! the day
 was fair,

And summer's gracious beauty filled the
 air,

As joy my heart. I hastened to and fro
 Among my daily tasks till I could go,
 Unclaimed by lesser voices, and could dare
 Listen to thine where there was none to
 share

My rapture save the silence. This did grow
 For my strange joy too loud! Belovèd, I
 Have borne great sorrows more courage-
 ously

Than this great good. In them I could
 descry

Life's needed discipline, but when to me
 Thy spirit calls, my answer is a cry
 Revealing all my insufficiency!

AWAKENED !

O my love, my own, that I had some
word to describe it !

Word to prison it in, that so it might not
die with me !

There is no word save love. Love means
both passion and object.

Is it joy or pain that I feel, in this strong
new sense of rebellion?

Is it hope or fear, this unrest that will not
let me be happy?

I shall never be happy again. I have paid
that price for your kisses.

Never again shall I know the half-content
of the happy.

O my love, my own ! Do they know, who
call themselves loving,

This that we know, when we stand with eyes
too blind through their rapture

To gaze on each other's face, with hearts too
faint through their beating

To hold the wonderful strength, that through
their weakness is wasted?

Love, that means sacrament, this, does it
come to all of the creatures
That use the word lightly between times,
between their laughing and sighing?
That laugh and kiss and forget, and say
they have loved one another?
Love, that surging through, cleaves the
heart so undone by its proving,
Rend'ring it all unfit thenceforward for hold-
ing contentment;
Weakest and strongest of all, is it one to
weakest and strongest?

Love! the triune, that means pain and hope
beyond power of describing;
Love! ne'er so swift in his flight but the
shadow abides of his passing;
Love! the betrayer perchance; the comforter
maybe, but always
The Wonder one could not but choose,
though one knew the choice ended in
sadness.

O my love, my own, lo, this you have
taught me o'ermasters
Even the teacher's power : never again can
you claim it!
Love and yourself are not one; though you
brought to me through your choosing,
Force and direction and strength, my life had
not held, sweet, without you.
Now though you come or go, yet all
through the coming and going
Love, the reality stays: I may live no
longer without it.

HEART'S GIVING.

WHAT is there that I would not give
thee, Love,
For blessing, aid or comfort? These my
days?

Why Life itself seems such a little thing,
I put it first of all I'd give to prove
The passion's deathless might whose fer-
vent ways
I vainly strive in hindering words to sing.

I must have given thee Peace, for I no more
Can find it in my heart, and long ago
The strength that filled its pulses was be-
trayed
To follow when thy shadow leaves my door;
Within which I sit listlessly, nor know
Life's sweetness while thy presence is de-
layed.

What do I give thee Love? now that Life's
best
Is lavished on thy head and all is spent.

What is there left to give that thou wilt
take?

Why all is left that was; still unconfessed,
This wonder with our being is so blent
We are made rich, not poorer, for its sake!

JONQUIL.

WOULD it have been any sweeter
If you had known its name?
Could the keen delight that its presence
wrought
Have been more in knowing the World's
wise thought
Called Jonquil its prisoned flame?

Would the gold of its cup have been deeper,
If some one had told you why
It rose from its six-starred petals up,
Or formed for your breathing an incense-
cup,
In the hour's delight gone by?

We did not know in the moment
I fastened it over my heart
Its name; but we said that in scent and
glow
It seemed akin to the flowers that grow
When the Nile's dusk waters start.

O scent, and color, and sweetness
Enshrined in the Jonquil flower!
O tardy knowledge that proves at best
More incomplete in the secret guessed
Than the charm of the asking hour!

THE PALE VIOLET.

O VIOLET, whom the Sun hath kissed
Until the color thou didst show
His glances first from amethyst
To palest blue hath changèd so,
Were these same kisses worth the cost
Of this thy bloom thus early lost?

Were it not better hadst thou bloomed
In some still, shaded spot, nor known
The ardor of the strength that doomed
Thy sweet thus unreservèd shown?
Thou wert not strong enough for this
The rapture of His cloudless kiss!

I will not stay to hear what thou
Might'st answer me; in truth thou hast
An air content, and, even now,
When this, thy beauty's wholly past,
Were the choice offered thee once more
No doubt thou'dst lose it as before.

NATURE AND LOVE.

WHAT would you do, what would you
say,

Dear heart, dear love, if here to-day?

Here, where the wondrous breath of
June

Fills all the golden afternoon
With odors, stayed a little space,
From wandering to their destined place,
By earth's content stayed as they rise
From Paradise to Paradise!

What could you do, or say, to make
The Perfect in itself partake

In our degrees of sweet content,
In our despairs at banishment
Each other's dearer self therefrom?

O love, however near we come
To Nature's peace her secrets wait
From human reach still separate!

My own dear love, the birds will sing
As now in each successive spring:

And coming seasons still will grace
With beauties all their own this place:

And tree and flower will deck this spot
As now they do when we are not:
And lovers yet unborn will see
And leave unsolved this mystery.

Alas that language holds no word
Wherewith to speak, wherein is heard
The love that by its magic makes
The heart unfit for sweet, that aches
Where it should bless, when it is shown
Earth's fairest scenes, and sees, alone!
Whate'er we reach has not amid
The charms thus reached contentment
hid.

And this the reason, sweetheart, why
The glories of the earth and sky
Smite as with pain the hearts that beat
With such a double sense; that greet
Each gracious scene the earth can show
With half the strength to see and know
That courses through the self-possessed
Strong hearts, unstirred by Love's unrest.

COMPARISON.

YOU sing of strong things, having known
them, ay!

Of strong things, living where such things
are found.

Daily your feet gain new strength from the
ground,

And your face draws it from the arching sky.

And so, through all your singing rings a cry

Of healing for the evils that abound

In these men's lives, thus gathered close
around,

Your nobler living to be helped thereby.

But I—my life the strength has only
known

That comes from Sorrow's touch, and I can
ring

This knowledge only through the songs I
sing.

Men do not gather grapes from thorns,
though grown

Where once a vineyard bloomed, and so,
my friend,

Your songs shall live, while mine with me
shall end!

AFTERMATH.

ALL the earth is clothed with glory
This glad-morn! From bush and tree
Do the birds repeat the story
Of Love's tender mystery.
Is it, 'all the earth'? Belovèd—that? or
but my thought of thee?

Surely no wild bird's breast thrilling
To its mate's song overhead,
Feels the rapture that is filling
My glad pulses, half-afraid
Even yet to lose the olden measure by
past sorrow made.

And no wild flower, 'mid the sparkling
Of the dew upon its leaves,
Doth so soon forget the darkling
Vapors that the night-time breathes,
As my soul forgets, and, freely this glad
morn, its past forgives.

I have wandered near Death's shadows,
Lived with Sorrow, known Despair,
Ere I found the pleasant meadows,
Which, beneath Love's sunshine, wear
Evermore through changing fortune, this
serene, unchanging air.

FOREBODING.

O LOVE, my love, still the winter lingers!
I dread the summer, I dread the
spring.

What strange new joy in her strong young
fingers

To us can the fairest of seasons bring?

What time like this when our blessed
passion

Finds through snow and cold its fair blos-
soming?

O love, my love! can the summer bring to us

More of beauty and warmth and glow

Than now we find, or its breezes sing to us

Sweeter songs than we hear and know

While, sheltered safe in the fire-light's circle,

Beyond in the darkness the night winds
blow?

The winter wanes. In each swift bright
morning,

Hints of the earth-change soon to be,

Subtle, elusive, yet sure, give warning

That now is ending for you and me

Snow-softened close of the dearest season

That years can render or eyes can see.

O love! in the waiting years now hidden,
That may o'erwhelm us with joy or pain,
There is no rapture or grief forbidden
To our heart questioning, eager, vain,
I have not tasted through love's foreknow-
ledge:
There is naught henceforth worth the
life's attain.

There is naught to reach of a greater wonder;
There is naught to seek of a fiercer bliss;
And Past and Present are rent asunder,
And Future's lustre made dim by this.
From farthest point of the soul's grand orbit,
The way turns back through the dark
abyss.

O love, my love! 'gainst the law supernal,
The changeless law that life's changes
show,
The law of action and rest eternal,
The law resistless that all things know,
What strength have we to withstand the
summons,
All nature hearing, that soundeth "Go?"

And is it helpful, the higher knowing?
Or may we turn from its light aside,
Nor feel nor reason about the showing
Of intuitions, unproved, untried?
O love, my love! with the clearer vision
Such power is ended, such choice denied.

UNACKNOWLEDGEMENT.

IT is not night. The sunset still is filling
With ruddy glow
The western sky, that yet seems all unwill-
ing

To thus let go
The source of its completement, whose strong
light
Retards the night.

It is not night. Above the sunset's splen-
dor

The blue sky holds
Through half its arch, a fairer light, more
tender

Than that which folds
The horizon with gleaming bars, whose hue
The sun looks through

I scarce can feel this white and blue and
golden

Soft canopy,
That spread before my gaze conceals the
olden

Dark mystery
Of space, star-lined, that puzzles by its
might

The human sight.

It is not night, 'though now is growing
sharper

The still, clear air.

The sky's pale azure tint is surely darker,
And, here and there

The gleaming of the stars as they appear
Proves night is near.

It is not night ; and so I haste to curtain
From out my sight,

The last faint remnant of the rare, uncer-
tain,

Fast fading light,

Before the dreaded darkness gath'ring fast
Brings night at last.

GOOD BYE.

GOOD bye! Dear love before me stir
The shadows of the things that were.
The memory of each past delight
Returns to make more dark my night :
The echo of our parting sigh
The only sound, our last Good bye.

Since our first mother coined the word
From her first heartache, has been heard
It's wail through Time's immensity.
God grant that His Eternity
May not be deep enough, nor high
To hold earth's saddest word—Good bye!

Good bye! Some say the words do mean
“ May God be with thee.” When between
Thy face and mine the moments run
Their 'lotted course beneath the sun,
And each one swift, or slow, doth part
Us farther still, Good bye, sweetheart!

God be with thee, Belovèd, aye
The very God we crucify
Afresh in loves that leave no space
In burning hearts for His dear grace
Until to us He sends this cry
To drown all lighter sounds—Good bye !

Good bye! Around me rings the roar
That men call silence! Nevermore
Can solitude itself be free
From this strong call, that holds for me
All future pain, all joys that I
Renounce to it. Dear love, Good bye!

SATIS VERBORUM.

WHAT man cometh after the King?
Prince or Noble, perchance, the grace
Of gentle breeding upon his face.
What charm in the gifts that his hand may
bring
To make glad the heart that has known
the King?

What man cometh after the King?
What future trouble can stir the breast
That thus lives on having known life's
best?

What future shadow worth noticing
By the sunlit eyes that have seen the King?

What man cometh after the King?
Many a one in his own degree,
Treading the paths of his destiny.
Life does not cease, though we cease to
sing
All lesser praise than is due the King!

ENTREATY.

KISS me love! and it shall be
With our lives as when at first
Love's empurpled blossom burst
Into flower for you and me.

Kiss me love, and we'll remember
But Love's sweetness, not the stings
That from June-time to December
Made the days such bitter things!

Kiss me, love! and we'll forget
All the long cold hours we've seen;
All the heart-ache that has been
Since thy lips and mine have met.

Kiss me! give me strength to go
All unkissed through hours and days
That await us ere we know
An hour like this, through Time's delays.

SANS COURAGE.

I AM so tired of it all!
Never a moment without!
Spread over life as a pall
Falls o'er the dead, so the doubt
Clings to the hope blotted out.

O for the power to forget
Though but for a day! One could bear
More bravely life's bitter regret
With a day thrown between, in which
care
And remembrance's sharp pain had no
share.

Somewhere the days grandly pass
Free from this shadow, I know:
Is it too much if one has
One such day to one's self, if that so
Comes strength through all others to go?

Ah, but the country lies far,
Over which spreads the wonderful haze
That conceals with invisible bar
The realm of the passionless days,
Whose peace the heart's grieving allays!

And the gate is so narrow, that one
Must pass through its portal alone:
And when the long journey's begun
One returns not again, though we moan
By the entrance-way sealed with a stone.

MY CHAIN.

I MADE my chain a goodly show
With garlands fair to see;
I held it up that all might know
How light it seemed to me;
I ran beneath it to and fro
As one whose steps were free.
From every tortured link I rang
Gay music, light and vain;
And all around me laughed and sang
In praise of this, my chain;
Nor heard amid the music's clang
The echo of my pain.
But sometimes, as I ran, I met
Some man's face, grave and white,
Held heavenward, with no regret
Between it and God's light;
But, glancing on the Ideal, it yet
Beheld no lowlier sight.
And then a discord sharp and strong
Fell on my music's ring;
And that which seemed so light, ere long
Became a grievous thing;
And as I passed, I hushed my song,
Through my soul's wearying.

And then again some man I'd see
Whose chain, so bare of grace
Yet nobly borne, made Destiny
Assume such minor place
To his grand will, small mirth for me
Lived while I passed his face.

Yet, through it all, the vanity,
The shame, keen, passionate
That sweeps my soul the while I see
These nobler lives, I wait
With dread the hour that takes from me
The chain I cannot hate!

Ah what strange joy, what new delight
Can take the place of this,
My burden borne through day and night,
Through mirth and weariness,
Till it has grown within my sight
The dearest thing that is?

It may be that, when shines for me
"The light that never shone
O'er any earthly land or sea,"
I still may clasp my own,
And know that Pain's reality
Was but God's benison.

THROUGH MISSING YOU.

THROUGH missing you the fairest flowers
Hold subtle poison in the scent
Which brought me once such sweet content,
You being by to share the hours;
All colorless their brightest hue,
Through missing you.

Through missing you gay music's beat
Hath lost its power to soothe or cheer;
It falls upon the listless ear
With harmonies made incomplete,
In spite of all that skill may do,
Through missing you.

Through missing you my life has grown
To such a weariness, that I,
I sometimes fear it may be shown
To you some day a thing put by,
As all unworth the living through,
Through missing you.

STORMING HEAVEN.

OPEN the door and let me in!
The wind is blowing and cold the
night.

The darkness sinks on my aching sight.
From thronging shadows of care and sin,
Open the door and let me in!

Open the door and let me in!
The earth is reeling beneath my feet.
The dregs of the wine o'er taste the sweet.
From the passionate pain of my life's has
been,
Open the door and let me in!

Open the door and let me in!
To reach the echo which filled at best
Each earthly joy with its vague unrest.
Lo, where earth's dreams and its hopes begin
Their true fulfillment, O, let me in!

Open the door and let me in!

The darkness stirs and the East grows red,
When the bounding pulse of one's life has
fled,

What matter how fair the days begin?

From the yesterdays, open and let me in!

Open the door and let me in

To Thy sense of Peace and the purer air
Of life immortal abiding there!

O Thou who suffered and died to win

The gate's unbarring—now let me in!

REINCARNATION.

I Have known you before,
Long before the sad day we met
Calling it "first time." We regret
Vainly all of that meeting's power.
We were not strangers, love, that hour:
We may be strangers, love, no more.

I have lived this before—
All this wearying, complex pain,
All this fever in heart and brain.
Many times must the struggle break
Life and thought for the human sake;
Many times as we found of yore.

All has been felt before—
Bitter sting in the unprized life,
Ceaseless consciousness of the strife,
Lived before, known before, e'en as now,
Trust and failure—one knows not how,
Though one remembers it o'er and o'er.

I shall come back once more—
Once? Nay, many times till there be
No more charm in the pain for me.
You will turn from the perfect rest
In highest Heaven at Love's behest
Since this has been for us, love, before.

Though we return once more,
Sometime, love, from the bonds of Fate
Freedom awaits us. Soon or late
Comes release, and the love that mars
Bears its healing within its scars
While we perfect it, o'er and o'er.

UNCERTAINTY.

O Heart's Belovèd, all the air
Is whitened with the snow!
Where are you, O Belovèd, where?
To you I may not go,
And if your sky be dark or fair,
Alas, I may not know!

I know not if the sunlight falls
Upon thee cold or warm;
Or if God's thought of thee befalls
Though present good or harm;
Or if to me thy spirit calls;
I only feel the storm!

O, Heart's Desire, if I might know
Some grave-clod held thee fast!
Then safe beneath this cloak of snow
My fears for thee were cast:
My hopes of thee were ended so,
And heart's peace found at last.

I know not and I may not know.

There is no greater grief:

In this uncertainty of woe

The heart finds no relief.

O I could bear to see you dead,

Were I, but sure to-day

You still were all uncomforted

As when you went away!

USELESS GRIEF.

O GOD! was ever sorrow like this one
That preys upon my life? So dark it
is

I may not ask for it the sympathies
Of loving friends, and so I sit undone
With its dark shadow 'tween me and the
sun.

Was ever sorrow like this one? remiss
In all of use one wrings from Grief's sad
kiss
The strength for nobler things through
trial won.

When one may turn heart-sorrow unto good
'Tis rather to be chosen than great bliss:
But this my Grief's unnamed nor under-
stood,

If it took shape at all the shape were this,
That one loved more than Thou has fallen
where

One nevermore may help his soul's despair!

MY LIFE.

THE life that was my own,
Give it to me again.

You are so strong, you men;
Now let your strength be shown.

It is beyond you still,
It rests not in your will!

We could not know, of course,
Just what the love would prove;
Nor how far we might move,
Together held by its force.
There is fault somewhere—whose?
The one who most doth lose?

I had heard long before
I ventured all—and lost—
What Love's frail tenure cost,
What passion proved at core.
I knew what lives had missed
Before we met and kissed!

And yet there was no power
In knowledge thus possessed
To hinder Love's unrest
From being mine this hour.
There was no choice—you stood
For utmost ill or good.

Where is your strength my heart?
What, made so weak by this!
One pays, you know, for bliss:
Ere life and Love may part,
One pays, though, at first thought
Love seemed a gift, unsought!

If one should find and know—
If one should gain at length
Through great forgiveness—strength;
What shall atone? although
Turned back to God, life yet
Remains His unpaid debt.

His debt! could God know such—
Debt, stronger than His grace
May ere again efface.
Should one forgive o'er much
Is thus life's wrong made right,
Or cancelled in His sight?

WAITING.

NOT in the darkness, where
The light may break on the asking eyes
Some joyful morn with a glad surprise,
But in the steady glare
Of desert sands and unclouded skies.

Not as they wait who know
That the night will end, or as they who
reach
An added grace and a purer speech
Because of tears that flow
Over life's bitterness sent to each.

Not as they wait whom God
Delights to pardon, because they see
With eyes of faith, that the days to be,
And the paths untrod,
Are one with the past in life's unity.

Waiting because one must,
With the sting of remembered life to
make
The dreariness of the present ache;
Feeling it all unjust,
The death's deferring, the life's mistake.

Eyes that have seen the light
Of the Gods descend! lips that drank
their wine!

Heart-beats as strong as the Past knew
mine!

One may endure this blight,
But no strength is to feel such is right!

Waiting, futureless, strong;
Choosing not the desireless life,
All the force in the soul at strife
With its enduring wrong,
Its returned purpose endlessly rife.

When it is rendered plain,
Shown to me fairly, good from ill,
Then shall the voice in the heart be still,
All its rebellion slain,
Its murmur hushed with the conquered
will.

REMEMBER ME.

O THOU Completeness! shadowèd
By my great agony and dread,
Remember me. I cannot pray.
I have no strength to seek the way.
Lest madness claim my soul from Thee
Whose thought I am, remember me!

Remember where Thy glory shines,
The outer darkness where I dwell.
Remember that my soul opines
Thy highest Heaven from deepest Hell.
Remember all I yet may be.
O Christ of God, remember me!

RETROSPECTION.

AS naked, new-born souls who vainly
yearn

For the lost raiment that was theirs erst-
while,

The raiment of the body, to beguile
Truth's searching flame, they may no longer
spurn

Or seek at their own pleasure,—so I turn

My glances backward from my long exile,
From out his court Love's shielding to dis-
cern.

But no trace of Love's vesture doth remain:

The shifting days have stolen, needlessly,

All proof of his sojourning once with me.

Belovèd, O Belovèd! this refrain

Makes what I know of silence; while I see

No more Love's comfort cast around his pain.

SOUL GREETING.

O THOU, who once did stand
For Life's supremest good,
Over the sea and land
The midnight hour doth brood.
Where'er on land or sea
Thy consciousness doth wake,
Answer the Soul of Me,
For our great dead love's sake!

I have no claim upon
Thy days and weeks and years:
I lost, and Time has won
What of thy life appears.
Thy rapture or thy pain
Not mine by God's decree;
Yet doth one hour remain
Unto the Soul of Me.

Whate'er thy thought has been,
This hour it meets with mine,
The inner world within,
By Love's remorseless shrine.
Till thou didst share God's power
Conscious I might not be.
Lo, this is thine, this hour!
This voice, the Soul of Me.

O charm me with thy voice,
I may no longer hear
By my own will or choice,
Nor with the outward ear!
Lo! I have earned the right
Through days of misery,
To this one hour's delight,
Granted the Soul of Me.

O clasp me close as when
With naught between we stood
With God apart from men
In Love's beatitude!
Out of the dark I call
To what we yet shall be
When Love is lord of all,
Answer the Soul of Me.

Then back into the dark!
When morning breaks no trace
Of this hour's passion-mark
Shall rest upon my face.
The years resume their sway.
Whelmed in Life's surging sea
Silent, through night and day
Pauses the Soul of Me!

MISAPPREHENDED.

YOU promised on one of the summer days
Of this old, old year, that now nears
its end;

To sing from the many the people praise,
Your song most cherished, to me, your
friend.

I should hear, O poet! "the best" you said,
Ere the sunset's light in the sky grew red.

We left the city and strayed along
Through the gold of the summer afternoon,
And listened, pleased, to a bird's sweet song
That followed our going, and it was June
When, each in the other so wholly blest,
We followed the sunlight toward the West.

There is time enough for the song, we said,
When the heart beats slower, and when
the breath

Less fluttering comes through the lips, afraid
To touch their Heaven this side of Death.
There is time enough for a song to bless
When rapture sinks into happiness.

So we wandered on, till we reached again,
Through the pathway's turning, the place
where long
The strife for power in the lives of men
Has dulled and saddened the spirit's song:
And you joined the throng, that, with rest-
less feet
Moves ever on through the city's street.

And so, my poet, it came about,
You being busy, and I too full
Of joy in your presence to think or doubt,
That the moment passed and the skies
grew dull
And the night descended, and still no word
Of the promised singing mine ear had heard.

Yet often now, as the night-wind sighs,
I dimly feel as I sit alone,
While the firelight brightens and sinks and
dies,
That perhaps, unheeded, my life has known
The wondrous singing I thought to reach
Alone through the words of our human
speech.

Ah, "the best," the fleeting, misunderstood!
Seen only fairly when set apart,
Heard only truly when winters rude
Make keen each sense of the listening
heart.
Has the soul e'er yet in its wondering quest
Known the passing moment we call "the
best"?

THE MYSTERY.

SOMEBODY said unto me,
 “If you will turn your head
I promise that you may see
 One who was long since dead.”
I turned not to left or right,
 But answered, “This vision dear
Has been within my sight
 This many and many a year.

Somebody said unto me,
 “If you will listen, Lo,
You may hear the voice of one
 Who loved you years ago!”
I smiled but I did not seek
 To make plain my dear delight.
“The voice of which you speak
Is not silenced day or night.”

Somebody said unto me,
 ‘‘The years both give and take
How can you thankful be
 Through life for a dead Past’s sake?’’
I said, ‘‘In Love’s sight there is
 No Future or Past to fear;
All beautiful things are his.
 All knowledge is now and here.’’

I said, ‘‘The symbols fail,
 And ever the idols fall;
One thing we may not assail
 The love that is over all.
This you would promise me
 Already is made my own.
I know in Love’s mystery,
 Lo! even as I am known.’’

He.

“ Rather yet that I could raise
One hope that warm'd me in the days
While still I yearn'd for human praise.”

THE LOVED ONE.

A VISION of the shadows 'neath her eyes,
Like violets languid with the heavy
dews
Of night's touch still upon them, doth arise.

The sounding of her foot upon the stair,
Like music heard in strange wild places, far
From haunts of man, makes tremulous the
air.

The color that her soft round cheek doth
flush
Tints also the fair petals of the rose,
The sweet wild rose upon the wayside bush

The light that shineth in her clear gray eyes,
Is like the surface of some mountain lake,
When o'er it first dawn's meaning doth arise.

The memory of her beauty and her peace,
Like the calm strength obtained from
sunset's hour,
Abides with me where e'er my dwelling
place.

INSIGHT.

ONE might easily be a poet,
If one could be always thrilled
With a present sense of the beauty
With which the great earth is filled.

But how can one write of green meadows,
And the might of the mountain's wall,
When the eye sees only gray housetops
Through a garret's low casement small?

And how can one write of the ocean,
When the health and strength of its breath
Is spent on half the wide world before
To the writer it traveleth?

Not all the lore of the ancients,
Can show to the mind the way
Wherein to write of the sunset,
When all of the sky is gray.

•

There is only one way, my darling,
That the miracle can be done ;
This, with the thought of you in my heart,
I have them all, every one.

And so I can sing for a lifetime
Of Life's wonderful beauty and grace ;
Though I live apart from world glories,
Having looked, dear love, on your face.

GOOD NIGHT.

GOOD night! The world is hidden from
view;

The silence thrills with thoughts of you.
God keep you in His shadows strong
From harm and wrong.

Good night! Beyond the weary screen
Of miles that stretch our lives between,
And hide you from my longing sight
I call—good night!

Good night! Since I am sure somewhere
Your kindly presence makes most fair
All days and nights, love's gratitude
Doth make night good.

CLOUD LAND.

O THE wonderful summer weather!
O the sheen on the hillside fair!
Made by sunlight and shade together,
Through which we entered the Cloud Land
rare
To be Love's followers there.

O the catch in the breath, when rapture
Merges into its twin-born pain!
O the joy in its fresh re-capture!
O the sweet in the passion slain!
These are the Cloud Land's gain.

O the passionate, sobbing wonder,
Meager heart-room to hold so much!
O the loss in the lives asunder!
O the bliss in the present touch!
Know the world dwellers such?

They who see but the Cloud Land's border,
Reaching never its paths we trace;
They who hear 'mid the world's disorder,
Echoes only from out the place
Filled with its mystic grace?

IMPERFECTION.

THIS is the kind of a day
Beyond the will's surprise;
When all sense of wonder dies
In a heart-contentment still.
When I reach the top of the hill,
Past the haze where the sunshine lies,
I may see you, love, with these eyes,
E'en you who are miles away.

One feels in the warm, sweet air,
Each hindering claim of sense
Dissolve, as dissolves the life
In the clover swathes brought low:
Feels how human life doth grow,
When parted by Death's keen knife
From its rooted, earth pretense,
Into something far more fair.

Where your place is by my side
Almost I feel you, sweet !
Almost I can make the miles
Between us seem ended things !
How closely the spirit clings;
How vainly the flesh beguiles;
On a day like this, complete,
Almost one is satisfied !

ASSURANCE.

WAIT heart ! It is coming yet !
What is thine own is waiting too;
Naught shall prevent its greeting you;
Changing seasons or tardy years,
Outer darkness or inward fears.
God's time serving we need not fret
The hour's retarding that's coming yet.

Wait heart ! For the stars they wait;
Every one that in turn appears
Set for signs and seasons and days and
years;
Thy star among them that would fair worse
Swifter grown than the universe.
Thy star's ascendant comes soon or late,
Learn thou to note it, and learning, wait

SYMPATHY.

YOU, and no one else will know
What is meant by the song that the
rest pass by;
You will hear through the words the cry
That caused the rhyme and the song to grow.
It will all be plain to you, only you,
Who have lived, as I have, the story
through.

I would to-day that you stood beside
The desk where I write : if I held your
hand
Strong clasped in mine, I might understand
And defy pain's power: but one can't deride
Alone the shadow that flies before
The sound of a friend's voice at the door.

And yet, I sometimes think, as I hear
Through my life's stillness the melodies
That only sound in such hours as these,
That the best beloved, the friend most dear,
The nearest presence, perchance, would
 break
The music's spell for the human's sake.

O friend ! the dearest my heart has known,
If you stood beside, if I held your hand,
We might fail together to understand
The songs that gladden the heart alone ;
For never yet was the music heard
Through the heart's content, or the spoken
 word.

SONG'S RECOMPENSE.

I GAVE to thee, O Song! the light
That filled my eyes ere thou wast known;
I gave to thee the bloom that shone
Upon my face; each swift delight
That fills youth's hours I gave, for what?
Thou answer'st not!

I'll answer for thee, that when one
Akin to what I was may read,
He'll shun, perchance thy paths, that lead
Through ways he dreams not of; he'll shun
If he loves ease and sweet content,—
Thy blandishment.

I'll answer for thee. When one takes
Upon his life thy seal, and turns
From thy slow kiss that stings and burns
Thereafter his heart's blood, that aches
Through all its pulse thus dispossessed
Of former rest,——

Why even then, so strong art thou,
He'll feel thy chain a dearer thing
Than his life proved without, and sing
Thy praise, as I do sing even now,
O first and best—worth seeking long,
O matchless song !

TWO YEARS.

A YEAR ago, a year ago!
What may we now of its sweetness
know?

What, O heart! in this gloaming hour
May we recall of its vanished power?
What is there left we may call our own
Of the passionate strength of the year that's
flown?

The life is ended we fain would show;
Hid in the shroud of the year ago.

The year to come, the year to come!
Voice in the heart why art thou dumb?
Having known wonderful things, what fear
Strikes thee now of the coming year?
In the twelvemonth's reign of the year ago
Is all compressed that thou art to know?
Fate may keep one hope that need not
succumb

Hid in the womb of the year to come.

TO HOPE.

I AM resolved that thy deceit
No more shall make my pulses beat;
That ne'er again my heart shall greet
Thy shadowy seeming,
With the old faith, that found thee sweet
And left me, dreaming.

Long, long ago, when youth and I
Abode with Peace 'neath summer's sky,
We first did hear thee, questioning why
We found such pleasure,
When 'cross the hedge in fields close by
Was greater treasure.

Didst not thou come to me and say
"A little farther on, this day
Being passed, thou'lt surely find the way
More bright and pleasant"?
I listened to thy specious lay,
And lost the present!

Didst not thou say to me that when
A few more years were passed, the men
Who laughed at my wise theories then
 Would need their proving?
Since my defeat, the world, I ken,
 Has still been moving.

O vain and fair and fleeting sprite!
Now that I walk without the light
That once made all the future bright
 With scenes unreal,
E'en Wisdom cannot stifle quite
 Thine old appeal.

E'en yet as I recall the days
When thou didst spread a kindly haze
O'er fears that darkened all Life's ways,
 O restless spirit!
Methinks some word of human praise
 Still due thy merit.

Perchance the visions that arise
Beneath thy touch on mortal eyes,
Are gleams from out the grander skies,
And fairer meadows,
That each of thy sweet prophecies
But dimly shadows.

It may be that thy clearer sight,—
Untouched by shadows of Death's night,
Undimmed by tears,—beholds the light
Of the great morrow,
That waits to set Earth's failures right,
And heal Earth's sorrow.

O helper of our weariness!
O Hope, deceiving but to bless!
Still lend thy charm, till our distress,
And wrath and scorning,
Are lost in the great tenderness
That fills God's morning.

PROVING.

IF you knew
How the sunrise and its setting
Keep my fond heart from forgetting;
How the moonlight and the dew
Bring so clearly,—bought how dearly!
Old delights once shared with you.

If you heard
Through the rising and the falling
Of sweet liquid notes, Love calling,
Though the messenger preferred
By his blindness to thy kindness
Comes to greet me as a bird.

If you saw
Shadows only, faint reflections
Of fair things amid dejections
Caused by separation's law,
These would show you what I owe you,
Strength and weakness of Love's flaw.

DISSATISFIED.

O SWEETHEART, dear heart,
How they came one at a time!
After the love the roses,
After the grapes the wine,
After the power of possession, gifts,
Separate yours nor mine.

O sweetheart, dear heart!
They brought them to you and to me:
We have stood knee-deep in the roses,
Nor heeded that such things be.
We have heard the praise in men's voices
Like the sounding of the sea.

O sweetheart, dear heart!
What thought of you just so far?
Formed your dimensions fragile,
Fashioned you what you are,
Then granted lest you be joyous
Sweets, one at a time that mar?

ENTHRALLMENT.

THERE, it is passed! We came
Together unto this place;
We reached this corner's turn
And followed the woodland road.
Now I breathe again with no load
Of memoried thoughts that yearn.
Here no hint of your vanished face
May the roadway's course proclaim.

Strange that the things we call
Inanimate hold such power
To darken and thwart the flight
Of the soul in its onward sweep!
Is there reason that one should weep
In repassing a scene made bright
Through the charm of a vanished hour
That shall not again befall?

I never shall love again
The length of that winding way;
My soul is not mine till I pass
Beyond its reflectiveness:
Not mine while I acquiesce
In its magic's power to surpass
My strength of will and gainsay
The present with its "has been."

INCONSTANCY.

O KISS me, kiss me, sweetheart!
Kiss me again and again;
For the breath that I draw is torture
Among my fellow men;
And the wine that I drink is bitter,
And my bread is salt with tears,
O kiss me, kiss me, sweetheart!
To help me through the years.

O kiss me, kiss me, sweetheart!
With your head upon my breast,
And I will forget life's promise,
While I am so caressed;
And I will remember only,
When we part from such embrace,
The peace that follows passion,
And the light upon your face.

SONG.

SHOW to me the way Love went,
That I too may follow.
Till again our paths are blent,
Vanishèd is sleep's content
From my eyelids hollow.
Show to me, ways that he,
And I too may follow.

You who love, O tell me where
Love from me is straying.
In what fields of finer air,
All unknown to heart's despair,
Is my captor playing?
You who love, teach and prove
Where false Love is straying.

ONCE UPON A TIME.

ONCE upon a time—O sweetheart,
Can you tell
If that time began or ended
Ill, or well?
Once in Time's most gracious kingdom
We did dwell.

Once upon a time! I falter
In Life's race,
Turn and stand a moment gazing
Toward the place
That this magic "Once" encircled
With its grace.

Oh, the roses, pink and crimson
That did grow
Wild and sweet for our adorning
Long ago!
Now no flower reveals the beauty
They did show.

Once upon a time the sunlight
 And the shade
Swiftly sweeping o'er the hillsides
 Pictures made,
Which were fairer than our footsteps
 Through them strayed.

Ah, that Time still lives, nor alters
 At our moan!
Though no second time may pilgrims
 Reach its zone;
Still the paths are ne'er deserted
 We have known.

Once upon a time! the vision
 Of its might
Fades away into the darkness
 From my sight;
Fades, and leaves more black the shadow
 Of the night.

AFTER.

I T is no loss to be dead:
'T is Fate's greatest boon to lie thus at
rest,

With this peace in the breast
That shall ache no more at a hot word said
By friend or foe, overhead.

'T is a wonderful thing to lie
In this state of quiet that is not vexed
By what may come next:
That is past, aye shut out with the sky
By this earth heaped so high.

Was it morn or eve when she came,
She, for whose sake this quiet lies
Forevermore on my closèd eyes?
I know not, they are the same.
But I felt her tears through the grave-
clods break,
For Love's tardy sake.

And the quiet that I had known
 Grew yet more still, and I knew that hour
 Death's most awful power:
And, somewhere in the dark, a voice made
 moan
For Love's empire flown.

It is no loss to be dead:
 The loss is in living, before is found
 This place 'neath the ground
Where the heart's long aching is comforted
With this peace in its stead.

IF.

WHAT would one do, I wonder,
 If the ship that was lost at sea
 Should come again to the harbor
 When hope had long ceased to be ?
 Should come with desire's fruition,
 With white sails all unfurled,
 Sailing grandly back some fair dawning
 From the other side of the world?

What would one do, I wonder,
 If the flowers that our clasp did turn
 From the pride of the garden's splendor
 To the withered leaves which we mourn,
 Should revive to their olden fragrance,
 Should bloom through Time's dust as
 then ?

What would one do, I wonder
 If the dead grace came again?

What could one do but wonder,
Should one of the fall days fling
For an instant the clouds asunder
'Neath which we've been wandering?
If the spring-time hope and endeavor,
And the flash of the spring-time light
Should illumine for an instant our pathway,
Ere the mists settle down on the night?

SELF SUFFICIENCY.

THERE is no one on this wide earth to
know
Thy sorrow save thyself. Each soul that
lives
Walks blinded by its own sad grief; nor
gives
More than a passing notice to thy woe.
There is no friend, how dear soe'er, to go
With thee into the silence that o'er grieves
Life with its shade, the death-hour that
retrieves
All former anguishes that life can show.

And, as that hour supreme is met, unshared
By other souls, as each one singly knows
Its power relentless, so methinks is dared
By strongest souls each hour of pain that
grows
From this poor life: one stands or falls alone
When all of help and comfort has been
shown.

THWARTED.

“ I STOOD, friend, where you stand now;
My foot on the goal.
My hand touched the hope longed for;
We stood soul to soul.
I trembled perhaps at completion,
By rapture misled.
I cannot tell how it happened,—
Thwarted!” he said.

“ Love came to me also;
Touched me and drew
All of my soul into being.
Love’s grace I knew.
Love came and went swiftly,
By darkness o’erspread,
I cannot tell where, though I follow,—
Thwarted!” he said.

“Fame called to me softly;
Named me her own.
My heart rejoiced at her summons
To the unknown.
Fame turned in possession
To bitterness shed
Over my life’s incompleteness. —
Thwarted!” he said.

“Why you live satisfied, happy,
I made to feel
All aspiration but failure
At last to reveal
One hope I sought through emotion,
Patience, or dread,
I cannot tell while I stand here, —
Thwarted!” he said.

IF I HAD KNOWN.

IF I had known, dear, the worth of loving
 When you loved me,
I had not scorned then your true heart's
 giving,
 And thus been free
To wonder where 'mid the world's commotion
 Such love has flown.
I had not turned from your life's devotion
 If I had known!

If I had known, dear, the world's caressing,
 Its bitter sting,
I had not slighted your love's confessing
 For such a thing.
I had esteemed then beyond all fashion
 That may be shown
Of form or face, one such priceless passion;
 If I had known!

A SPED YEAR.

A YEAR sped;
Spring and summer and fall,
With a winter's snows between
The golden leaves and the green;
A year's sweet, proved, complete,
And God's love over all!

Days in it, fair,
Filled with color and bloom,
Filled till they held no room
For shadows of after care;
Swift they passed, all unforecast
By hint of future gloom.

Nights in it, clear,
What did the sunsets show?
All peace that the heart may know,
All joy that the heart holds dear,
All life's best, revealed, confessed,
Shone in their afterglow.

Nights and days!
These that linger unsought
Are thus named; these enwrought
Of weariness, dread, delays,
These that the sped year brought!

A year sped,
What did it take away?
Fall only? winter and spring,
With the wondrous blossoming
That o'erspread
Earth from the summer's sway?

A sped year,
Filled with rapture, and yet—
What may be left in a life
From its swift passing? Lo! strife;
Unknown fear;
Rejoicing, proved regret.

Not always, heart,
Shall the days smite thee with fear
Of their repeating; the year
Loved and sung was but part
Of that which waits for thee, dear!

Waits all unmoved
By days that tremble and break
Over the lives that o'ertake
Joys, thus o'ertaken, disproved.

Listen ! the crash,
Made by Time's waves evermore
Echoes here only. Their roar
Stirs not the center; they dash
All of their foam on the shore.

Listen; nor grieve,
Lo, thou shalt come to thy own!
This the year's passing was shown
Not that at last thou shouldst leave,
Heart-sick, the hope thou hast known.

Words! and they fail,
But the trust fails not; we scan
Life for the end of the plan
Whose marred beginning we wail.
Yet, the Power knows, that began.

Listen,—and wait,—
Trusting the Love that endures
Over the years and their lures,
Stronger than passion or fate,—
This that our grieving obscures.

COMMUNION.

I F, while I lived, I had heard one word
From any other soul,
That meant, "I, too, have seen and heard,
I also seek your goal ;"
It had not been so hard to stand
From all mankind apart,
If only one had grasped my hand
And known my secret heart.

If, while I lived, one voice had said,
"I fully understand,
I also walk the path you tread,
I know the meaning grand
Of the Soul's song that dulls the ear
To any other sound,"
We two had brought God's Heaven near
While treading earthly ground.

If, while I lived, one little part
Of praise or sympathy
That sounded over my dead heart
Had been vouchsaféd me,
I had not been so glad to go
To my appointed place.
God knows—perchance 'twas better so—
God knows in either case.

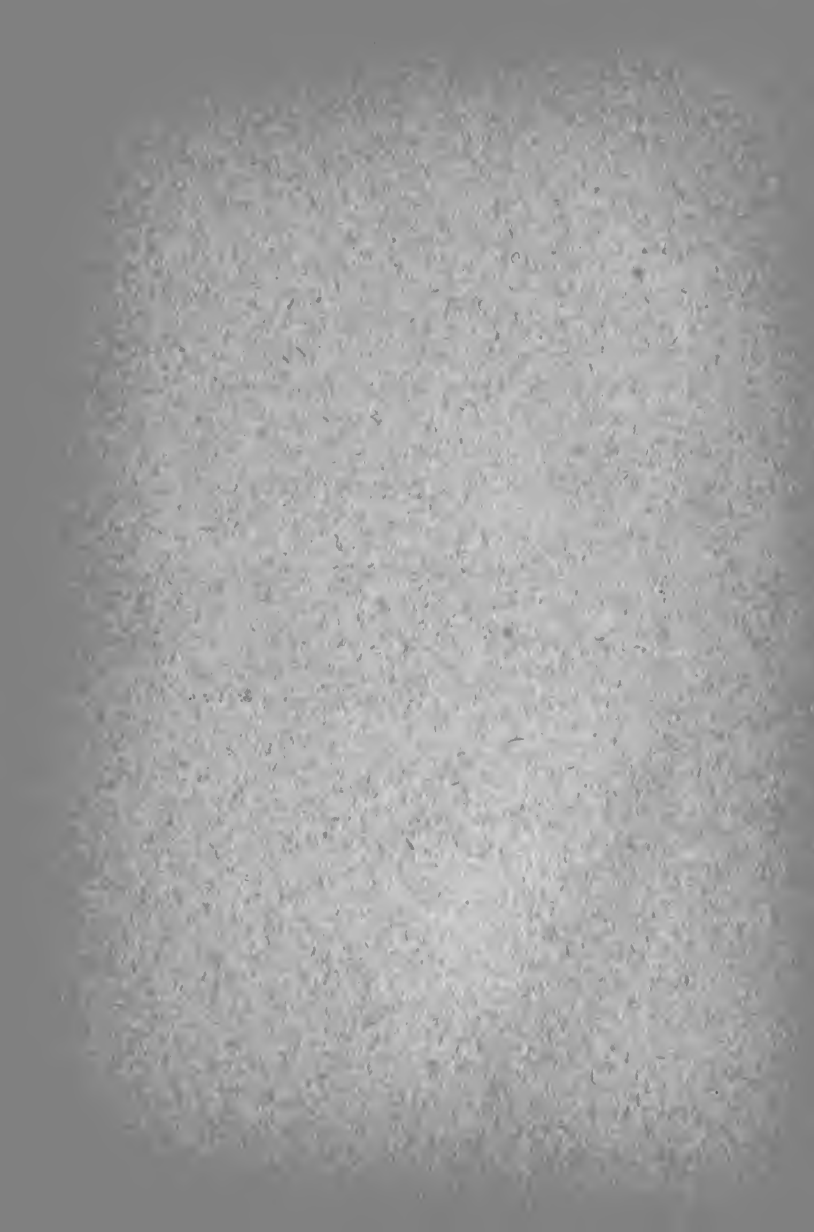
INCOMPLETION.

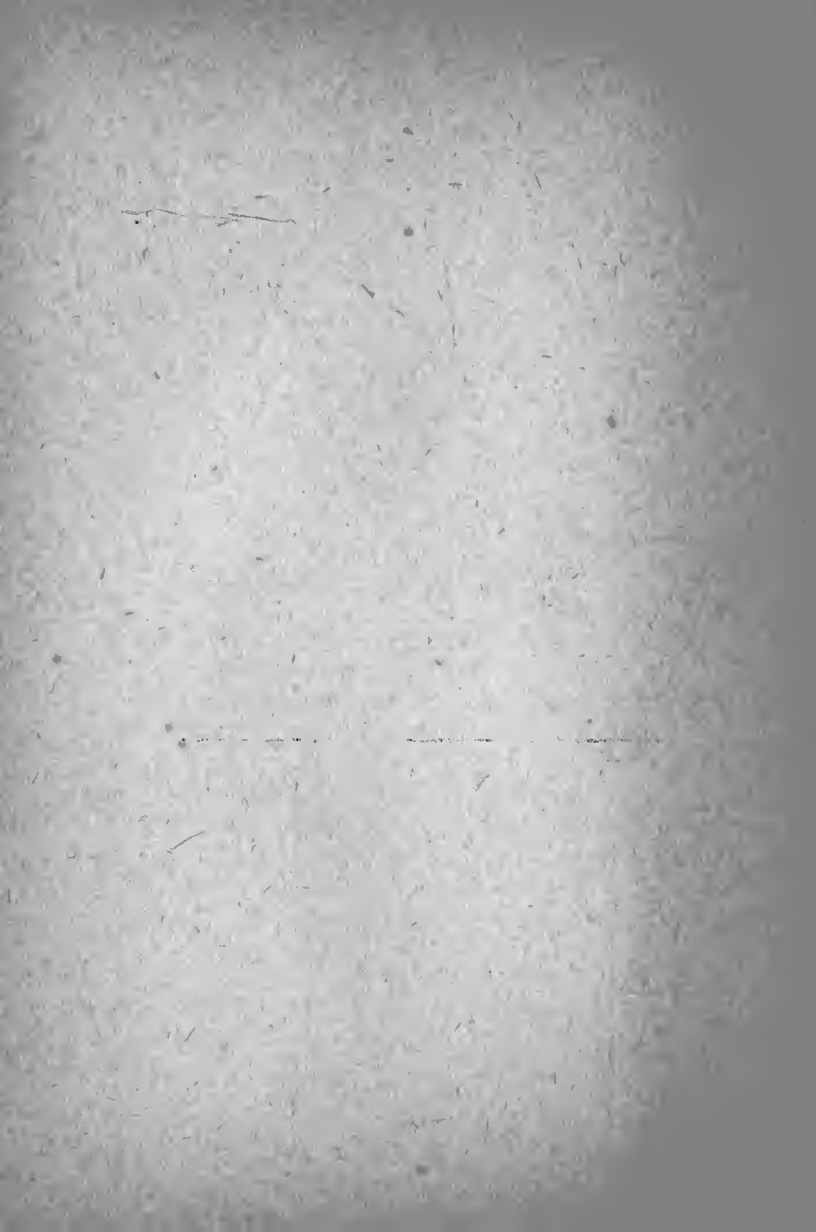
IT matters not that I must leave
The work undone; I may not grieve.
It must prove equal to the thought.
It matters not; some one will make
The future effort for its sake,
Through which completeness shall be
wrought.

It matters not when all is done,
That hope is lost and death is won;
Since through his touch the larger hope,
Proved surety, waits to cheer and bless
The hearts made weak by sore distress,
With its enwidened horoscope.

It matters not, we sing, and turn
From our weak loves to clear discern
 God's perfect love through their alloy.
Since here or there must surely prove
Revelment of His promised love;
 What waiting shall our trust destroy?

It matters not, O weary soul!
That thou shouldst fail to reach the goal,
 With obstacles so hedged around.
Beyond all chance the goal shires still,
Through life and death, past good and ill,
 The healing of its peace is found.





Envoy.

A YEAR of singing; the year is gray;
The mists hang thickly along the
way;
The spring is tardy, its pulse is slow.
What of the seasons we are to know?
The night creeps slowly toward the day.

A year of singing; the spring-time thrills;
And Nature quickens the vales and hills.
The sun shines warm on the yielding
earth,
The green leaves welcome the year's
rebirth,
And hasten forward as Nature wills.

A year of singing; the year is green;
The birds fly lowly the boughs between;
The birds fly high at the heaven's mark;—
And which is wiser, the wren or lark?
The glory sought, or the comfort seen?

The singing falters, the drought is here;
The fields lie bare of the garnered year.
The toil is ended and what remains
To spur us onward toward further gains?
Not yet may autumn and strength appear.

A year of singing; the orchards turn
From green to golden, the red leaves burn.
The subtle bloom of the ending charm
Of summer rests on the field and farm.
Between the frosts still the sunbeams
yearn.

The cold is gaining, the ice and frost
Have set their seal on the treasures lost.
The firelight draws us from field to hall;
The winter treads on the track of fall.
What of the seasons, their gain or cost?

A year of singing, the year is white,
The snows are spread o'er its past delight.
The birds are still, and the sun is cold,
O silenced singing, the year is old!
The day has vanished into the night.

O ended singing! lo, now as then
God makes the music; man holds the pen.
The notes are faulty; the score runs right.
The whole is written within His sight;
Whatever discord is caused by men.

O endless singing, O perfect bliss!
O life eternal begun in this!
O perfect Love, as the symbols fail
The changelessness in our songs we hail;
Thy mighty purpose we may not miss.

Miscellaneous Poems.

AT PARTING.

MY songs, the time has come when ye
may be

No more as in days past my very own:
Soon other tongues will sing your music's
moan,

And other lives amid their tears will see
My own tears prisoned in your minstrelsy.
My songs that through such weary days
have grown

Of this my life such part, shall ye being
known

To other singers longer comfort me?

Within each one of you my heart has placed
Some record of its rapture or its pain ;
Some praise of much prized blessings that
remain,

Some wail for vanished joys no longer
traced

Upon Life's dial by Time's partial sun.
Go forth—no longer mine—nor live for one.

My songs that came to cheer my own life's
dearth,

Go forth to seek amid Life's ebb and flow
Some resting place, where, as men come
and go

You may be found, if in you lives aught
worth

The finding. Through the myriad paths of
earth

Comes each one to his own, perchance e'en
so

Ye may return from wandering to and fro,
And rest within the heart that gave you
birth.

It may be that I need you more than those
To whom I send you forth. No other heart
Beats with mine under the same weight, or
knows

The sorrow which, in forcing mine apart
From lighter living, through the silence
grows

To be at last Joy's tender counterpart.

What do you know of Life? some souls
may cry.

You, sitting in your corner with your books,
Safe, sheltered from the hard World's cruel
looks;

Unheeding evil things that pass you by?
What echo of Life's strain and agony
Can penetrate your stillness? In what
nooks

Of crime and sin have you cast grappling-
hooks

Of faith to raise us from our misery?

What claim have you upon us, unto whom
You never came before with deed or word?
Why do you seek to dissipate our gloom,
Because, forsooth, some power your heart
has stirred

To utter in the quiet of your room
Words of Life's song your ear cannot have
heard?

When daily o'er your labor shines the sun,
Or, if that shines not, 'tween you and rain
Stretches the crystal shelter of the pane,
What do you know of lives that have to
run

Unsheltered through the weather's stress,
with none.

To bid them pause and from their flight
refrain,

Which leads where at the last there doth
remain

The outer darkness, entered here upon?

There is enough, they cry, to hear and see
Of wretchedness, without the added sting
Of lives like yours, that play at misery,
And harp in perfumed stillness on the
string

That but records Life's real agony.

Why should we cease our plaints to hear
you sing?

God knows my shelter did not prove so
strong,
But that Pain entering through it taught
my heart
To feel, though beating from the World
apart,
My kinship with its pulses. Right and
wrong
That ring alternate echoes in Life's song
Your sound at times seems one. Aye,
though I start
At thought of fallen nature's bitter part,
One heritage doth to us both belong.

We seem the sport of circumstance and
place;
And, that to-night I raise to God my eyes
Unclouded with the sense of soul-disgrace
That dims so many, is not that there lies
More strength within my soul; or that
Sin's space
Is filled and farther entrance way denies.

DIRECTION.

WHAT matters, after all is done and
said,

This life's resulting; whether loss or gain,
In these the things we strive so to attain?
Whether the soul is starved or comforted?
The question, friends, is of the path we
tread;

Not of the place now reached, nor of the
pain

Of future strife, which must perforce
remain

Concealed, nor yet from whence the pathway
led.

There are so many words, one can but
choose

At times unwisely 'mongst their multitude;
But when the soul's desire is all for good,
Some good must linger with us, though we
lose

Through our o'er-reaching grasp, the things
that make

Life seem unworth its cost for their lost sake.

THE LOST POET.

WHEN he is dead, and it is fairly known,
That nevermore shall his evanished
face

Make fair or darken any earthly place,
Why do we vainly seek to make our own
Each action of his daily life, once shown
To our unheeding vision? Strength and
grace,
The higher vision through the common-
place,
Came to him through soul-solitude alone.

Each little hindering act and jarring sense
In daily living, that annulled the fire
Of genius in his breast; each weak pretense
Of quenching at earth's springs his thirst's
desire;
These being ended, let us, friends, from
hence
Worship the music's echo, not the lyre!

SONG.

AH, yes, I sing! I sing to you, forsooth;
As little caged birds shut in the dark
To make them sing the tender strains we
hark

'Mid grosser sounds to hear. As these, in
truth,

Turning each impulse of their prisoned
youth

To living good, from the dead freedom
stark

Before them, while the passer-by may mark
The rapture only, guessing not the ruth.

They sing, all else denied them but the
song,—

The sound of rustling breeze and water's
fall,

The gleam of sunshine's radiance over all,
Until the longing for these things makes
strong

The power that reaching them perchance
had grown,

Through much content, unfit to make them
known.

ASPIRATION.

O LORD, my God! through these my
days I yearn

For that day's coming, whose strong light
shall fall

On my cloud-darkened life, and ending all
My wanderings, which but sought at every
turn

For nearness to Thee, grant new power to
learn

The half-guessed truths I may not here
forestall

While hindered from Thee by the body's
wall,

Nor through the vesture of its flesh discern.

I have not found among the words that
sound

Men's echoing doubts—nor one strong doubt
dispel—

Words strong or pure enough in which to
tell

The World of these vain longings that re-
bound

Unto the desert-ways that close me round,
Nor pierce the vail beyond which Thou dost
dwell.

UNREST.

I SAID, I will go hence and find a place
Where this despair that clouds my life,
is not.

And lo, the while I said it, came the
thought

That never yet in journeying through life's
ways

Had I beheld such place, or heard its praise
Sung by the restless hearts that long have
sought

The goal where rest from unrest may be
wrought

By patient toiling, after many days.

Throughout all Time the echoing cry re-
sounds;

From human hearts its wail sounds loud or
low:

"Ah, anywhere than here, these grievous
wounds

Were easier borne." Alas, that even so

We dull the good that lives within our
bounds!

'Tis self, not place that bears our burden's
woe.

REALIZATION.

THESE many years I sang my songs alone.
I sang them softly, in my heart, nor
heard
The faintest echo from my tenderest word.
The world went by, unheeding joy or moan,
Unheeding peace or longing in their tone ;
And men's hearts throbbed not, mine alone
was stirred
By far faint music to the world unknown.

And then, one day, one passing heard, and
caught,
With stronger breath, the music's charm ;
and all
The people listened to the louder call
Through which the same sweet symphonies
were taught.
And I too listened, all my heart o'er-
fraught
As self-belief proved that which did befall.

LOST SYMPATHY.

O BROTHER-souls, who erstwhile trod
these ways
That now I wander in ; O souls that found
Such sense of isolation in the round
Of things external that make up the days ;
O souls, that strove when there was none to
praise
The strife, till it, completed, did redound
Loud credit,—late found balm, brought to
a wound
Grown hard o'er its own pain through such
delays :

O souls, who hungered oft for one to reach
And know your thought, e'en as you
understood
Its awful sacredness, which yet your speech
Echoed, although it might not as you
would,—
If it might only be that one could turn
Such grieving into help, nor longer yearn!

INVOCATION.

O YE, who hear the voices of the night,
Arise with me and tell what ye do
hear,

With other organs than the natural ear!
Arise, and keep your earthly vesture bright
From soil of daily use, and turn your sight
From worldly pomps unto the dayspring
clear.

O poets, sing! ye need no longer fear
Aught save the stifling of the new song's
might.

O, ye who see the coming glory through
The veil of matter clinging closely round
The spirit's insight into things profound,
Sing, though your heart-strings break in
striving; sing
The love of God to men! Through suffering,
The voicing of the highest love is found.

There is no sound to utter unto men'
The wondrous rapture of Love's strange
new word;
That may be writ in silence only, when
God's hand doth touch our foreheads—
only heard
By others in like ecstasy, and then,
That we mistake not, lo a word is found,
O kinsmen, Poet is the nearest sound!
Fear not great Love's appointment; strive
again.

But we are sinful men and women, Lord.
We love the shadow, trust, fail, love again
Thy fallen image in our fellow men.
And when Thy love into our hearts is
poured,
We weep at our unworthiness to be
Chosen from out mankind to tell of Thee.

ONCE IN A WHILE.

ONCE in a while, O the days between!
Somebody comes with a word to say;
Some moment's space in the hurried day.
We who are weary are comforted
For the long dull days when no word is
said,
Once in a while, O the days between!

Once in a while, O the years between!
Love comes unto the hearts that yearn;
Late or early, to each in turn;
Shining through many eyes unto one;
To another, once only, and love is done.
Once in a while, O the years between!

Once in a while, O, the centuries
Of sin and struggle, O waste that dies!
Ere, slowly, surely, the human sees
Love's true fulfillment in sacrifice.
After long whiles! in each soul forlorn,
As to the nations the Christ is born.

THE SOUTH-WEST WIND.

THE south-west wind was blowing,
And lovely was the day,
The sunlight brightly glowing,
When Jamie went away.
There was no means of knowing ;
Earth kept glad holiday;
The south-west wind was blowing,
And our twa hearts were gay.

The south-west wind was blowing,
The day they brought him back ;
But o'er the sky so glowing
Was spread the tempest's wrack.
Fate had no means of showing
The coming tempest's track.
The south-west wind was blowing,
The day they brought him back.

O cruel wind and faithless
I loathe your gentle breath!
Why did you leave me scathless,
And waft my love to death?
I would all men were knowing
As I your cheating ways!
When southwest winds are blowing
Then most I loathe the days.

When the winds, roused from slumber,
Shrill loudly, or sing low,
One voice among their number
My fearful heart doth know.
I see blue ripples flowing,
I see the waves grown gray,
When southwest winds are blowing
And lovely is the day.

AFTER THE STORM.

OUT of the sky the storm has fled,
With rattle and crash of thunder:
To the welcome sun turns each flow'ret's
head,
Still bending the rain drops under.

Forth from the shelter which welcome
proved
Through hours of the storm's enduring,
Again to the woodland haunts beloved,
I follow the path alluring.

And lo! where the wood and the meadow
meet,
Just the skirting-ground of either,
A little brown nest lies at my feet,
By the wind's force drifted hither.

Over my head two wild birds small,
Persist in a vain endeavor
To awaken life, by their loving call,
In their nestlings, hushed forever.

A little way from the empty nest
Is the cause of the old birds' sorrow.
Though the skies may clear, still their wee
birds rest
Beyond an awak'ning morrow.

Ah, other summers will come and go,
When is ended this summer's grieving:
And again will the birds fly to and fro,
With hope their new nest enweaving.

Yet here at my feet, while the earth is
thrilled
With joy at the storm-cloud's flying,
Here, with its music forever stilled,
This summer's nest is lying.

WINTER WHEAT.

I N the midst of the field's gray stubble
Patches of green appear.
'Tis the winter wheat, with its promise
sweet
Of a blessing that waits to cheer,
With its crowning bloom, after days of
gloom,
The brow of the coming year.

Through the stretch of life's gray surround-
ings
Flit glimpses of brightness too;
Like hint or promise of better things
To come in life's yet unnumbered springs,
When the winter days are through;
When the hopes that lie 'neath the winter's
sky.
Shall unfold to their harvest true.

TOWN OR COUNTRY.

WHEN the rain comes down,
Out of a sky of leaden hue and
dreary;
When the small birds, grown
So suddenly of their wet kingdom weary,
Nestle 'mid dripping leaves, with rueful air;
The town seems fair.

When all the fields
Of waving corn and grain are blurred together;
When all the prospect that fair Nature
yields
Looks marred and dismal in the rainy
weather,
With all our soul's might, as the rain comes
down,
We long for town.

But, when the night
Between us and the stars hangs its wet
curtain,
The cricket's voice of might
Assures us still in accents clear and certain,
That "next week"* comes some good to
surely cheer
Life there or here.

*"Creek creek, creekity creek
Something's sure to happen next week."

REFLECTION.

DOWN in the water below my feet
There lies reflected an image sweet
Of the world in the May-day weather,
The old, old world, in the garments new
Of her latest spring; and I pause to view
The pictured grace in the mirror blue,
Of the old and the new together.

Over the edge of the banks are seen
Low fields far-stretching, whose vivid green
In the spring-time light shines only:
While fruit-trees yield to each breeze that
springs
The wondrous scent of their blossomings,
And from topmost branches a bird's song
rings
To gladden the watcher lonely.

Still covers the landscape o'er, the spell
That God created when all was well

 In the grand old garden story;
Before came sorrow and care and dread,
'Neath whose advancing the secret fled.
Ah! dear first mother, the ages dead
 Have dulled not that secret's glory.

I wonder about it, sitting here,
The strength that bore thus from year to
 year

 The pain of the keen regretting;
As over the lives of the children small
The curse descended, and slowly all
The sorrows that unto the race did fall
 Kept your tortured heart from forgetting.

O, shoulders slender to bear the weight
Of a world's madness and scorn and hate,
 Nor sink 'neath so sore a burden!
O, heart courageous to still beat on
After the faith in your strength was gone!
O, weary waiting before Life won
 From Death's touch the longed for guer-
 don!

We are so used to it, we have borne
Through such long ages the life forlorn,
Decreed to us through your sinning,
That this your courage to us appears
A thing unknown in the later years,
Not found, alas! in the hemispheres;
New-found since your world's beginning.

As, slowly rising, I turn my face
Toward the home pathway, the subtle
 grace
Of the scene mocks my retreating.
Ah, still there rests upon earth and air
The peace perfected, we may not share,
Till the lips of the silence unsealed declare
 Its charm through some sweet, strange
 greeting!

BITTER-SWEET.

HOW did you store and make so real
The fleeting flame of the sunset's hue?
Where did you gain what you now reveal
Of vanished glories the summer through?
When did you prison the color fleet?
Tell me your secret, Bitter-Sweet!

When days were long, o'er the summer
flowers

Your hard green berries unnoticed swung;
And no result from the soft, sweet hours
Lingered your clustering leaves among.
Ah, frost was needed and cold and sleet,
For your complement, my Bitter-Sweet!

Who first named you had doubtless tasted
The bitterness of the summer's flight;
Had known the sweets of the season wasted,
Had felt the fear of the winter's blight;
And through his kinship to you did greet
And name your being, O Bitter-Sweet!

Sweet and Bitter you bind together

Known and unknown within your sphere;
The vanished sweet of the summer weather;

The sharp'ning chill of the closing year;
In your scarlet globes, lo, these forces
meet,

That make you as life to us, Bitter-Sweet!

Christmas comes but once through the
waning

Of the year's seasons, or swift, or slow.
Lo, through your sweet is our old com-
plaining

Changèd to hope as the seasons grow!
With added courage our pulses beat,
For days untried to prove bitter, sweet.

QUESTION AND ANSWER.

“TELL me why all through the living
Of the troublous life you have led,
There has shown on your face, through its
grieving,
Such courageous endurance,” she said.
“Tell me, O woman, whose sorrows
Far outnumber your hopes, why the fear
Of the coming relentless tomorrows
Chills you not?” “Just the words, ‘I am
here.’”

“Can you hear, then, this echo resounding
Through the ages of tumult and sin?
Through the passionate sorrow surrounding
Your life, can its comfort creep in?
O heart, that beats on when the beauty
Of your life is turned pallid and drear,
What upholds your adherence to duty?”
Low she whispered the words, “I am
here.”

“Is there then in the world not one lover
One friend, one true heart unto whom
You could turn till the storm-cloud is over,
That now shadows your life with its
gloom?

Is the wide earth so faint in its aiding
That thy hurt spirit turns for its cheer
To past ages, and thus retrograding
Cheats itself with the words, ‘I am
here?’”

“O heart, that thus questions so keenly
The faith that for ages has stood
As a rock, ’mid life’s surges that vainly
Pour upon it their desolate flood,
The one thing that is real ’mid the fleeting
Of life’s changeable shades that appear
But to vanish, is this, God’s own greeting,
‘To the end of the world, I am here.’”

SIC TRANSIT GLORIA MUNDI.

A T morn it stood within its walls
Of hard-baked clay, a sightly thing;
At eve within the palace halls
Its direful fate I sadly sing.
Only the day before 'twas bought,
A little Fuchsia in a pot.

Out on the pride! that soon did raise
The Fuchsia from its resting place,
And unto every passing gaze
Displayed its beauty and its grace.
'Twas lifted early to the ledge
Of rock that guards the palace edge.

The Fuchsia is a modest flower;
It hung its head and blushed and sighed
For the past peaceful morning hour
When first it stood the steps beside.
A vague presentiment did fill
Each leaf with dread of coming ill.

At evening's close a cloud did rise
In the far east and quickly spread;
And in the dark and sultry skies
Each careful mind the lesson read
Of danger, from the gathering wrath,
To all within the tempest's path.

But while we rushed, with eager pace,
The flower to save—alas, alas!
With simple, unaffected grace,
Its former station on the grass
It reassumed, by turning round
Some three times ere it reached the
ground.

Methought I heard its voice, as low
Upon the ground it lay forlorn;
“ My mournful fall but serves to show
The fate of all too early borne
From peaceful homes to meet awhile—
Then faint 'neath—Fortune's fickle smile.

“O country roads, beside whose track
Unharmèd the wild sweet clover sways,
Through sunshine warm or tempest's wrack,
Contented through the summer days,
Your humble voices could relate
The moral in my early fate!”

I listened, but it spoke no more,
The rain beat on its bruised head
The flower which but the day before
Cheered every heart, alas! was dead.
And, thinking on the clover weed,
I mourn the Fuchsia's fate indeed.

HOME GREETING.

O, mine by every right the soul
Of man may claim from God! and won
By granting to each setting sun
Some part of life's allotted whole.

O Home, looked forward to for years,
When nights were long and days too full
Of toil and pain and burning tears
For one to reach the Beautiful!

O vision! that the silent night
So often brought and took away;
Now realized within my sight,
And strong to bear the light of day.

Among thy lovers live but few
Who longed as I to reach thy rest;
Thy sacredness seems ever new
To this world-weary, tired breast.

O Home! O place divine! whose walls
Shut out the sound of wordly strife;

O breathing space! wherein the life
Gains strength to meet World's grief, that
falls

More lightly at thy threshold sweet
Than elsewhere on the land or sea;
The weary waiting, it may be,
But makes possession's sense complete.

DREAMS.

I N my dreams, the tenderness
Of dead friendship charms again;
All its olden power to bless,
Still is felt in each caress,—
Shadow-pictured, now as then.

In my dreams the kisses are,
Which throughout the daylight's space,
Wait from daily cares afar;
Wait, till freed from commonplace
To them turns the tired face.

In my dreams, Death's victory
Is annulled; and, through the gloom
Of the night, returns to me
One dear Presence to illumine
Yet again Life's tarnished bloom.

TO MY ROOM.

O COMRADE mine! the shadowy hour
 that o'er us,
 These many years,
 Has made its presence felt, at last before us.
 In form appears;
 We greet, nor longer dread the ended power
 Of parting hour.

Through each vicissitude of life, I've found
 thee

 Most true and tried;
 When the great world was ringing false
 around me,
 I've sought to hide
 My doubting heart where thy sweet peace-
 fulness
 Did always bless.

Yet I have left thee in pursuit of pleasure,
Where pride and joy
Filled utterly the glad hour's rapturous
measure;
Where no alloy
Dimmed pleasure's chain, except the haunting
thought,
Thou must be sought.

Wilt thou remember, as fresh faces fill thee
And life goes on,
Mid the new human griefs and joys that
thrill thee,
The friend that's gone?
And will thy memoried air disturb the rest
Of some new guest?

I shall remember in the strange new places
Where I may dwell,
Pursuing the old aims amid new faces;
Nor let the spell
Of coming years make those I've spent
with thee
Less dear to me.

Through youth's best years, dear room,
we've shared together

All life can hold

Of storm and sunshine, warm and wintry
weather.

The seasons rolled

Past us and came again, nor discord found
In all their round.

Farewell! thine air dismantled seems to
chide me

As I depart.

Whatever may in coming years betide thee,

Grant to each heart

That seeks thine aid, the help and sym-
pathy

Thou gavest me.

CORAM NOBIS.

THERE is no grief and no regret
In that which lies before;
No weariness the heart to fret,
No losses to deplore;
We bring our burdens of the past,
And leave them at the door.

O mystic door, that swings between
The known and the untried!
Who passes through this arch serene
Finds but one right denied;
The shadow of his former self
No more may walk beside.

Before us shines the dawning clear,
Behind us lies the night.
The Future brightens as we near
To make our own its might;
Freedom, self-chosen, evermore
Has he who finds its light.

UNCOMFORTED.

IT never can seem again
As it used to long ago,
The years between now and then
Have altered the world's face so;
And the power to bless in the new seems
less
Than the old, as the seasons grow.

It never can seem again
Be the journey short or long,
As it seemed in youth's spring-time, when
The hope in the heart was strong;
Ere its courage blent in the discontent
Of the world's great chorus-song.

It never again can seem
As it used to when the light
Of the home-lamp's cheering gleam
Streamed out on the winter night;
When the heart grew warm through the
wildest storm,
At sight of its lustre bright.

Look up—O Soul! o'er thy sighing
Dawns a hint of that morning, when
Thou shalt cease thy querulous crying
“ It never can seem as then ” !
Ah its wondrous grace shall all loss efface
When the time shall be one again!

RECEIPT FOR POETRY.

ONE half an ounce of common sense,
One ounce of world's experience,
One pound belief in other men,
And one of being duped again,
Two pounds of power to dream, the while
The waking brain takes note of time.
I grant ye, friends, the right to smile;
This quaint receipt is solely mine.
Mix these in crucible whose form
Was forged in fires of deathless Love.
Be sure and keep the mixture warm;
If cooled it hardens from above,
Becomes o'erlaid with scum of pain,
And renders bitter all below,
And hence the whole receipt is vain.
One taint of self, it must not show;
But only Love's resistless might,
And only Love's unceasing grace.
This, followed surely, brings to light.
True poetry in every case.

HER ANSWER.

I HAVE no time, she said,
To marry you.
Youth's sunshine is too sweet, too dear,
To overcloud with duties drear
That housewives do !

I have no heart, she said,
To say farewell
To freedom sweet, that strayed with me
Through journeys far, whose ecstasy
No tongue can tell!

I have no power, she said,
To put away
From clamoring heart the things that fill
Its need, that I may do your will,
From day to day.

I have no strength, she said,
To face the years,
Weighed down with other's weal or woe;
My own soul's weight doth heavier grow
As each appears!

You cannot think, she said,
Because your heart
Beats faster at my step, and each
Swift pulse unto my own doth reach,
Why we should part.

This may not be, she said,
Yet, at your call,
My reasons wise had worthless proved,
If, as I have not, I had loved
You more than all!

IMMUTABILITAS.

"He sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

HE sends the rain
Alike upon the just, and those
Made otherwise by cruel blows,
Whom loss or pain
Have rendered hard or weak. On all
His rain-drops fall.

He sends the rain
Upon the just and the unjust,
And some are strengthened and their trust
Doth still remain.
Some rise refreshed to do His will,
And some lie still.

The grass lifts up
Its spears, made strong by drops that beat
The life out of the fragile, sweet,
Spring flower's cup.

And strong and weak are raised, or slain
By the same rain.

The grass shall live
Through summer days, that beasts may
know

Its garnered sweet, when storm-winds blow,
And winters grieve.

The useful things are strong to bear
The rain-drops' care.

But flowers, why earth
Is covered with these useless things,
These off'rings that the earth-life brings
Our joy or dearth !
Soon other flowers will fill the place
Of such dead grace.

CHRISTMAS-ROSES.

ONCE a year do the roses blow,
June-time roses so fair and fleet.
This is the time of the frost and snow,
This the season of cold and sleet,
But we remember through Christmas cheer
The fragrant bloom of the early year.

Once a year do the roses blow,
Christmas-roses, but once a year;
Which flowers are fairer we do not know,
Or which are found to our lives more dear
The roses lost with the summer skies,
Or the Christmas-roses to-day we prize.

This we know through the summer days,
This we know while the sleigh-bells chime,
The Love eternal that placed our ways
In changing seasons and fleeting time,
Will surely render, each in its place,
The Christmas gladness, the June-time
 grace.

And so, thus knowing, we let them go,
The things that gladden, the things that
 cheer.

We may not keep, e'en while loving so,
Each gracious season throughout the year ;
We may not lose as the seasons pall,
The Love unchanging that granteth all.

LIFE'S LESSON.

NOW I would know how to love you;
If you should come again,
From out the years and the distance
That keep you safe since then.
I would not fret you nor grieve you,
As I did once long ago;
I did not know then, my darling,
O my love, I did not know!

But the years I know, and the patience
That comes to the life from each;
The loss in the worldly living,
Of the tender, daily speech;
The silence in thronged assemblies,
The leaden heart below
The bravest smile, O my darling,
My lost love, these I know!

THE CALIFORNIA CRISIS.

SPRING, 1888.

IOWA? yes sir, that's the state
 Most of us hails from here;
 Downright good folks, I calkelate,
 To tie to through the year.
 I'm glad to know you anyhow,
 Though you don't mean to stay
 More'n two days; that, I allow,
 'S about the tourist's way.
 This funeral to-day,
 Made all on's, you might say,
 Just bluer than a whetstun.

We all loved Johnson; fact I knew
 Him better 'n the rest.
 We come from the same town, and grew
 Up longside. I come west
 Ten years before him, stoppingsome
 To see what luck would do;

Farmed in Nebraska, then I come
All Colorado through.
The restlessness just grew;
Some times, sir, that I knew
Seemed bluer than a whetstun.

Settled here finely in this spot,
Four years ago, and done
The best I could to buy a lot,
To stow the folks upon.
I had time on't and put my all,
Three hundred dollars in,
Thinking with any chance at all
The rest on't I would win.
It seems now like a sin,
The way that things did spin;
Now its bluer than a whetstun.

In just six months, sir, it was found
My lot was needed more
For business property; the ground
I got six prices for.
And while the stores were buildin' there,
The lot and contract too

Changed hands three times, sir, I declare
I'm not a stuffin' you.
Good Lord, the way it grew!
The boom that we've lived through
Left us bluer than a whetstun.

You see, sir, Johnson come too late,
Though that we didn't know;
It takes a boom to educate,
Men's senses seem so slow.
We thought that things would keep along
To all eternity.
Town lots from ranches bought for a song;
We got slipped up, you see.
I'm sure, though, you'll agree,
Mournin' for him with me,
All on's bluer than a whetstun.

The wise ones saw the edges thin
Some months ago, when he
First struck here and they took him in.
I 'clare to God, sir—we
Were not all sharpers—I was green
As any tenderfoot

That crossed the Rockies; if I'd seen
This break think I'd a put
His all and mine afloat
In such a leaky boat,
And him bluer than a whetstun?

I heard a woman sent him first
To the Pacific slope.
He aint the first one, nor the worst;
Most men get through with hope
In one shape or another 'fore
They try the climate's spell.
There's some things, sir, it can't restore;
'Twas so with Johnson. Well,
He'd lived, sir, through his hell,—
Finished, as dead he fell
Being bluer than a whetstun!

He had a brother, I've not seen
Nigh on to twenty year,
He was right fond of, but between
Them something come,—'twas queer.
I've fancied sometimes it might be
This same girl. It's too bad

All round! What's that you said to me?
"Silence!" or you'll "go mad."
Your brother surely had
Some cause, then, to be glad;
Not bluer than a whetstun.

LIMITATION.

I SPOKE to-day through the telephone;
Sent my voice miles away to a friend.
Wonderful link from the purpose shown
To the distant ear at the circuit's end!
Dumb was the wire in the outer air,
Naught could the passersby hear or see
Of the thought of love that was traveling
there,
Between the heart of my friend and me.

Sound is that we are tuned to hear,
Air vibrations that strike the sense;
In one second the human ear
May forty thousand experience.
But to the millions, perchance, that break
Above, around us, our ears are numb,
And from lesser waves that do not o'ertake
Our second's limit, no sound may come.

There is a man 'mid the surging crowd,
Smiled at, wondered at, all unknown;
"Poet" called, when the world laughs loud
At the words he hears o'er God's telephone.
He is keyed to vibrations beyond the ear;
There are such we know in our planisphere.
There are sounds above, there are sounds
below
The plane where we walk, that we may not
know;
Well, these are the sounds that the poets
hear!

There are vibrations, we hear it said,
The ether makes for each color seen;
Four hundred millions, the light shines
red,
Increasing waves show the yellow, green,
More and more form the ideal blue,
Faster and faster, increasing yet,
The scale ascending in order true
Finds culmination in violet.

And, where the light falls on the eye,
So many waves ere the eye may see,
Think of the things we may not descry,
Which move among us so mightily!
Perchance the terrors our souls that shake
Are living shapes in the world unseen;
The love that binds and the hates that ache
May use us idly, poor toys that break!
Or crush us, unknowing, themselves be-
tween

CONTENTMENT.

I KNOW that these things are:
The restless sea,
The strong white breakers, and the mounting foam,
(Like joy in sailors' hearts at nearing home,)
The inspiration of the morning star,
The moonlit waves, the glory of the sun
That gilds the western sky when day is done.

I know that these things are:
The deep blue sky,
Undimmed by smoke and dust and toil of men,
With whom I strive for life. I know this when
Above my head the brazen heavens scar
Sweet summer's meaning in the parching town,
And hope and thought and God are beaten down.

I know that these things are:

—Though not for me,—

The breezes laden with the sweet strong
scent

The early summer brings; the deep content
Of dumb things grazing in green fields afar;
The song of birds; the peace on earth and
sky,

That changes not for creatures such as I.

I know that these things are:

And are for me,

Who know them (as in heaven I too am
known),

And so I bide in peace, far from my own.

Yet not in truth am I so very far.

What matters one's abiding, when the soul
Contains within itself earth's wondrous
whole?

GRANDMOTHER'S SINGING.

I 'VE been thinking to-night of a story;
Not romantic indeed, scarcely strong
Enough at the best for much glory
To follow its ut'rance in song;
Yet I doubt not that odes laudatory
Have been writ where less praise should
belong.

My thought was of a little old lady,
One without whom I might not in this
Most peculiar of worlds, as a baby,
Have been brought to find things so
amiss.
But this question of Fate's one that may be
'T will take sev'ral more worlds to dismiss.

She lived long years ago, when a woman
Had more duties than now to fulfill.
When the questions that trouble the human
In this later-day culture were still.
And she married when young, quite the
true plan
To adopt even now, if one will.

It may be that a smile will come stealing
O'er your face when I tell you she had
Thirteen children, with whom in her dealing
She lived ever as common sense bade :
And they rose up and blessed her, revealing,
Through their lives, truths the proverbs
have clad.

Now it happened five times the Lord
brought her
Back from laying her dear ones at rest ;
And again to the living who sought her
Was her loving sweet ministry blest.
Ah, in thinking of this, her granddaughter
Writes through tears, of the strength she
possessed!

Dear heart! all through Life's toil and its
pleasures,
All through losses and grieving and pain,
Still there rang in her soul the sweet
measures
Of the music we strive so in vain
To express. Few our words for its treasures,
Few the souls who expression attain.

Yet, 'mid sweeping and mending and
baking,
Amid efforts unpraised and unknown,
Did she lighten each toil's undertaking
With quaint phrases and rhymes of her
own;
Till the work was made blest through the
breaking
Of its chains by the courage thus shown.

Fourteen years have gone by since her
 singing
 Has been ended on earth! Fourteen years!
 And to those whom she left, lo, their
 bringing
 Has been bitterness often and tears!
 But we know that she dwells 'mid the
 ringing
 Of the songs made by stars in their
 spheres ;

Where the music continues, unbroken
 By the noise of the days and their care ;
 Where its harmonies only are spoken ;
 Where the seasons are ended ; and where
 The rest that remaineth is token,
 Evermore, that God's presence is there.

APPREHENSION.

A SHADOW turned, a shadow spake
Some words my soul unto ;
And all my heart did fear and quake
Its strongest pulsing through.
For who can tell what a thing like that
May further say, or do ?

For years I had taught my doubting heart
No trust in this shade to place.
For years I had striven to heal the smart
Left by knowledge of its grace.
For years I had journey'd far—at last
To meet it face to face.

I knew that duty was hard and cold ;
That the shadow was false and sweet ;
But my heart was numb and the year was
old,
With its promise incomplete ;
And so I stood in the dawning gray
And heard the shadow speak.

“ You have not known me,” said the shade,
“ To thus feel fear and dread.
My own behold me undismayed,
A passing glory shed
On mortal life. Behold my face,
Lo, I am LOVE!” it said.

It drew the hood from off its face,
And turned its glance on me.—
I thank God for this sight of grace,
Daily on bended knee.
That once great Love revealed himself.
That I was there, to see!

And now between me and the sun
No shadow dims the way.
I know no fear as life goes on;
No hopes my heart betray,
If I had known the shade was Love,
I were his own, to-day.

UNAIDED.

THERE is no one to hear the song, I said,
And thenceforth stilled the echo in
my breast.

Then all earth's outer sounds were hushed
to rest,
And I did walk as one un comforted.

There is no one to see the light, I cried,
The strange white light that blinds me as I
see,
The vision to my fellows is denied,
There is no one to hear or see with me!

O fool, the voice that cries is not thine own
That thou shouldst still it at thy will's
behest!
Utter what thou dost hear, nor make thy
moan
At others' heedlessness. Do thou thy
best.

If the world heard and answered thee, what
then?

What thank have ye? The sinners do
the same.

Give forth thy thought, if to unheeding
men,

Ye had example if Christ came again.

THE EQUESTRIAN PARTY.

OR THE MISADVENTURES OF THE LATER-DAY
GILPINS.

Five kindred spirits once resolved
Upon a ride to go:
The hour was set at five o'clock,
Ere yet the sun was low.

They all agreed 'twas best they should
Meet at some central spot;
The Gilpins' was the house they chose
As being easiest sought.

The evening came, the clouds were drear,
And many thoughts were sent
From five most anxious minds to know
What all the others meant.

At last Miss G. — saw at the door
Her brother's manly form,
And of the legal mind enquired
His thoughts about a storm.

On other evenings, when the clouds
Were full as dread and drear,
And he intended forth to ride,
He saw no cause for fear.

But when he saw his sisters dear
Arrayed in riding trim,
He said no soul would ride that night,—
Or so it seemed to him.

But very soon the door-bell sent
Fresh courage to each heart,
A page appeared and said, “Now, girls,
All’s ready for the start.”

So these two maidens sallied forth,
Resplendent to the view,
To seek the others who would start
From Ellis avenue.

But when they reached the house they
heard
What caused them much dismay;
The other three were seeking them,
But by another way.

So they returned, right hastily,
Unto the Gilpins' door,
Only to find the other three
Had started back once more.

Again their weary steeds they turned,
And the familiar way
Was traveled once again by them,
All on the self-same day.

The avenue again was reached,
And nothing was espied.
With heavy hearts they backward turned
Upon their lonely ride.

They galloped up, they galloped down,
And argued earnestly
Upon the proper course to take,
But not a friend did see.

At last, with wisdom which their years
Scarce led one to expect,
They said no more they'd try to meet,
Nor on their woes reflect.

And, so they hied them down the street
To Drexel Boulevard,
And, with each other satisfied,
Their joy no more was marred.

When the sweet scenery of the park
Had caused them much content,
The youngest maiden's thoughts returned
Where they'd been often sent;

And from the store of scripture truths
This one she called to mind,
That in the mercy shown to beasts
One's character we find.

The other girl had also read
Much scripture in her day,
But was too wise to call't to mind
When bent on pleasure's sway.

And when she saw far down the street
A party riding fleet,
She to her horse applied the whip
And hastened them to meet.

As they drew near the riders proved
The ones they long had sought;
And, in their joy at meeting, all
Past troubles were forgot.

But soon they proved the words, that all
"This world's a fleeting show,"
For one young woman's horse when urged
Would straightway trotting go;

Which caused her such distress and gave
Such mental anguish too,
They gathered round and all did think
What it were best to do.

Then one whom years had wisdom taught,
Inquired most earnestly,
Why from the trotting-steed the girl
Should not transferréd be,

Unto the easy-riding steed
Her escort then bestrode,
Which grave suggestion all agreed
Unnatural wisdom showed.

So, in a moment, all was o'er;
At least some twenty past
When the equestrians homeward turned
Their weary steeds at last.

One of the party rode a steed,
Whom neither rein nor check,
Could hinder in his efforts vast
To break his owner's neck.

And though each steed's peculiar mind
Was different from the rest;
On one point they were all agreed
They would not keep abreast.

At last the riders reached their homes,
But not as fresh and gay
As when an hour or so before
They started on their way.

That night their bones were all full sore,
But, O, the weariness,
Which on the next and second day
Their bodies did possess!

The moral that this tale affords,
I'm sure you'll all agree
Has been so clearly shown, it need
Not now repeated be.

But, lest some mind the moral lose,
And feel the loss most sadly,
And others different morals choose,
We'll state the true one gladly.

'Tis this, when all have once agreed
Upon a place of meeting,
Let not wild youth's impetuous wish
To give them earlier greeting,

Cause you to gallop off too fast,
Lest in the vain endeavor
To o'erreach fate, you find too late,
The friends are lost forever.

COMMANDMENT.

“SPEAK,” it said. “The world will heed
’Mid its heartache and wild laughter;
Its sad toiling and its greed,
And the silence that comes after
The first heartbreak, when despair
Strongest seems while passionless;
Speak, and to the world declare
How Pain’s ministry may bless.”

“Speak,” it said. But I was dumb,
In the sudden, strange outpouring
Of the rapture that had come
To my life, its past restoring.
So I hid my face and said,
“Lord, my lips unworthy prove;
Let some heart still undismayed
Teach the lessons of Thy love.”

“Speak,” it said. And then I poured
All my soul into the telling
How the angel, man-abhorred,
Stern-faced Pain into my dwelling
Entered once and made her own
All my claims to life together;
Showed thenceforth her face alone,
Changeless through the changing weather.

Days and weeks and months rolled by;
Months grew into years before us,
While we watched there, she and I,
Embers of the fire, while o’er us,
Stars shone through the summer nights,
Rain fell through the autumn’s grieving,
‘Springs bloomed through the winters’
blights,
Yet she never spoke of leaving.

Stern and grave and sad her gaze
Lingered on each wish I cherished,
Until Hope forsook my ways,
And my joys all slowly perished.
Till at last I tried to buy,
Her departure from my portal
For I loathed her, being I,
And but human; she, immortal.

So I bought her one by one
All fair things that gave life pleasure,
Merry thoughts that used to run
Through the mind in joyous measure,
Old delights and tenderness,
Treasured yet more close since never
On this earth their like shall bless
Future effort or endeavor.

Then I laid beneath her touch,
All the wild ambitious yearning
That assailed me overmuch
In youth's springtime undiscerning,—
Yielded all, save one thing, kept
In a secret place, where only
My own heart knew that it slept,
In a sacred stillness lonely.

Then Pain spoke, who years had sat
Mute and still, "Your best is guarded.
I am waiting still for that
All to me must be awarded,
E'er I leave you." Here her smile
Filled me with strange sudden wonder.
She had never smiled the while
Of her sojourn my roof under.

Blinded, dazzled, by its light,
 Rendered powerless of concealing
What was hers, even by the might
 Of her majesty's revealing,—
Then I brought her where I kept
 Life's supreme and dearest token,
Led her where Love's shadow slept
 Since the day his power was broken.

Then she left, and nevermore
Sought to enter at my door:
But the wonder of her smile
Lingers with me yet the while,
And I sometimes know the fear
I was blind while she was here.

So I spoke and so I wrought
All the feeling into thought—
But the blessing I should tell ?
Pain has vanished, that is well ;
But Love's shadow followed Pain,
Thought alone doth now remain.

Thought remains and thought alone
Forms the life I call my own.
Is it well when all is gone
Thought and I should tarry on ?
“Lord,” I said, “I cannot guess
How Pain's ministry may bless!”

From the bounds of night and day,
From the web of flesh and sense
Was my spirit borne away,
Severed from its earth pretense;
To a place where souls remain
Ignorant of loss or power,
And I missed, remembering Pain,
My inheritance and dower.

For I saw how very slow
Souls who know not Pain do grow.
All Pain's terror, all her good,
By my soul was understood.
"Speak," was said, and I obeyed;
When the flesh my soul arrayed.

APRIL WEATHER.

A PRIL weather, you'd jest think the
sun

Never meant to shine agen, skies all dark
and dun,

Then a blaze of glory, not a cloud in sight,
Seems like what is runnin' things 'd never
git it right.

April weather, pretty close to May,
Here the robins jawin' bout it every day;
Perkin' up and tellin' all about the run
Of bad luck their havin' sense the spring
begun.

April weather, jest, and no man knows
When the wind's a kitin' from which way
it blows;

Awful tryin' season. It don't seem to me
Sky's as bright and clear and blue as it
ust to be.

Got to quit my speechin' and see about the
work.

Neighbors mebbe have some right, callin'
me a shirk;

Allus laughin', sneerin', cause I hear and
know

Other things in spring than rain while
the green things grow.

There's no use a talkin' wisht' I'd never
had

One more sense than other folks, makes
me so blame mad.

Wisht' the work was further, wisht' I'd
time to say,

Jest how glad I am the year's gitten
into May.

April weather, jest a year to-day—

God! to think about it,—sense she went
away;

'Nd me a beggin', prayin', I might go with
her,

Er else she'd tell me bout the place
she was startin' fer.

“Where’s your christian faith, man?” all
the preachers say,
Rubbin’ in a smartin’ wound when they
come to pray.
I can’t make them understand how it run
aground
Such a little slab of stone and a tiny
mound.

Wonder ef she’s found out! wonder ef she’s
sure,
Wonder ef she feels now all that I endure!
I knew more of heaven when Lucy Jane
could speak,
’N a raft of preachers could tell me in
a week.

I don’t doubt that heaven’s somewhere,
shinin’, strong,
Can’t be changed or altered jest by one
man’s wrong;
Know this sure and certain, lived once in
that state,
’Fore last April left me all disconsolate.

Yes I'm sure of heaven, but what tries me
more

Is, jest what a man kin do, when God shets
the door.

There's so much of hunger and so little
food;

Mebbe ef he's been there once, that is all he
should.

Mebbe there warn't quite enough—seems so
when its found—

Bliss to last forevermore, 'nd its passed
around :

Jest a taste of rapture, then an awful
thirst

For an endless time of love, stronger than
the first.

I don't know egsactly what I'd say or do
Ef she'd come and kiss me, ef my dreams
came true;

Ef some April mornin' when the sun shines
bright,

I should see her standin', shinin' on my
sight.

Think I'd go plumb crazy, wouldn't need a
word.

I'd forgive the year that's gone sense I've
seen or heard.

I'd forgive a lifetime, all that men endure,
Ef only while I'm waitin', I could jest be
sure.

WAIFS.

SCATTERED, here and there,
Where all or none may see;
Lost from heart's keeping, where
They nevermore may be
Its own, once flown,
My songs go forth from me.

Read by many or few,
Laughed at, spurned, or sought;
Ah, if the people knew
From what the song was wrought!
Heart's loss, grief's cross,
Ah, if the heedless thought!

Some live on through the years;
The best? Lo, who shall say?
Ever the truth appears
Stronger through Time's delay.
Heart's good, withstood,
Lives in a song some day.

THE CRITIC'S VERDICT.

I T chanced I heard what the Poet said
When the critics gave him leave.
They all agreed, "It is sad to read
How a soul like his can grieve.
If he could write in his fate's despite
Of Hope—we might then believe."

He answered them, "One writes what one
knows,
Far better it is to tell
Of thorns that wind 'round the paths we
find
If they be describéd well,
Than to cheat the eyes with mists that rise
Before Hope's glamouring spell.

I write of pain, for my life grew one
With its shadow day by day.
There is no need you should pause to read
The words that I fain must say.
Somewhere I know there are souls that grow
Toward God in the self-same way.

I write for those who have stood alone
In the dark, where none might see
Their soul's distress in its loneliness,
For I know that such there be;
And they will hear with the inward ear,
While the critics disagree.

I write to tell of a certainty,
So much stronger in its might,
Than hopes that break, leaving hearts that
ache
More keenly for their light;
Of strength, outgrown from the spirit's
moan;
Of God's everlasting right.

But the critics murmured on, that Hope,
Although proved deceit, was still
A better theme for a poet's dream
Than a strength derived from ill.
But I was glad that the Poet had
Proved stronger than their will.

REGENERATION.

FIRST, discontent
With what the hand can reach, and then
Grieving, as swift each bubble breaks
Within the grasp, that overtakes
To lose again.

Dull wonderment, as life goes on,
Unchecked by loss of all that made
The effort it has undergone
Seem worth the struggle thus betrayed.

An insight into Order's laws;
Thence surety past all hopes or fears,
Of living strength through Nature's flaws;
Of good beyond the fleeting years.

Perception through the letter's art
Of truths its forms but dimly show,
That one must lose life's counterpart
Before the real life he may know.

He who would find his life must lose
Desire that all may understand
Its poor expression, and must choose
To be, unproved, the substance grand.

Regenerate, aye, born again;
These are the throes the soul must bear,
Before its entrance elsewhere
To truths but dimly guessed of men.

THE PHARISEE.

I THANK Thee, Lord, that I am not
As other men, whose lives fulfill
Their destiny, nor well, nor ill,
But tamely prove a common lot.

I thank Thee for the power to turn
From sin's domain the passions rude
That try the heart, until for good
Their utmost strength alone may yearn.

I thank Thee for the restlessness
That drives me on, without reprieve:
I thank Thee that no more I grieve
For low contentment's listlessness.

I thank Thee for the keen desire
To search Thy laws, that fills my breast;
For truth that lies all unexpressed
Save to the minds that do not tire.

I thank Thee even for all loss,
All bitterness, that proved at length
Unto the life a source of strength
To separate it from world's dross:

And that, through bars of flesh and sense
That bind the soul, I feel and know
Thy love's revealment, even though
They mar its larger consequence.

I thank Thee, Lord, for all these things;
For my life's lot, for others' good,
For rest denied, and peace withstood,
For all that clearer knowledge brings:

For this identity, that strives
At variance with what surrounds
The narrow circle of its bounds,
I thank Thee, while it yet survives.

THE PROBLEM.

I HAVE followed the thought of Charles
Darwin,
Through creation's vast problem, to find
At the last that the link is still missing
Which should marry all matter to mind.
I've evolved from the Past but the knowl-
edge,
"Thus far shalt thou go, and thy kind."

I've attended the later-day lectures,
With which ministers strive to supply
The hunger and thirst of the needy;
But mere words cannot stifle the cry
"Give us food or we perish," that echoes
From men's souls that for lack of it die.

I've drawn close to the second-sight seers,
And sought, while they truly did show
My life and my thought and my purpose,
Their secret and insight to know;
But though baffled, each soul that so
searches
Clears the soil where Truth's blossoms
shall grow.

I have sat in the halls where the culture,
Called Ethical, seeks to dispel,
The hope and the fear so inherent
In man's soul, of a heaven and hell;
'Til the clamor of words made me able
To exclaim when they'd proved it, 'tis well!

And then, when, my searching all ended,
I've returned to myself, is made known
The strength and the power of the spirit;
The Truth that in silence is shown,
Through the still voice that whispers, "Be
patient,
God is, thou shalt come to thy own."

MY PRAYER.

O LORD, my God, through all my life
Let Hope be mine ;
To whisper still of Thy Divine,
When all my ways are filled with strife,
When all my thoughts with care are rife,
Lest I repine !

O Lord, my God, for cheerfulness,
I then would pray ;
Through each dark hour that clouds the
day,
Seeming to make Thy bounty less
Than it forever is, to bless
The devious way !

And then, to keep me near Thee, send
With ill or good—
That it may well be understood—
An humble spirit, to befriend
Though Life's ordeal, unto its end
My humanhood.

VICTORY.

AS I lay a dying, a dying,
The noise rolled up from the street,
Where men were selling and buying, —
For the day was incomplete, —
Till the quiet chamber echoed
With the tread of their restless feet.

As I lay a dying, a dying,
The faces came and went ;
The living faces were crying,
But the dead ones looked content.
'Twas the only way I could tell them,
So closely were they blent.

As I lay a dying, a dying,
 I took back the words I had said,
Against God's grace in denying
 The hour for which I had prayed.
I was strong to forgive my existence,
 The hour before I was dead.

As I lay a dying, a dying,
 Was hushed Life's bitter moan.
The heartache ceased from its crying
 At Life's injustice shown.
I had thought, at the last, God would hear it;
 But I went on alone.

As I lay a dying, a dying,—
 O friends *I* never died !
I reached Love's truth, whose denying
 Had caused all griefs betide ;
But I lost all griefs in the passing
 Lo ! with Death's self they died.

EXPIATION.

I DIED. God placed me in a lurid place,
Because of deeds done in the body's
thrall.

(For my soul's good it was.) And all the
space

About it echoed with the wailing call
Of evil souls. Ceaseless it rose and fell,
And one in passing railed and called it
Hell !

But still I heard, as when I lived on earth,
Faint rapturous music halting into speech.
And in my heart there was no sense of
dearth ;

Still to my soul Love's mighty chord did
reach ;
And so I did not fear its gruesome spell,
I knew the while I heard, it was not Hell.

I lifted up my eyes and from afar
Two of God's angels came and stood
amazed
Beholding me. Where utmost raptures are
Their sphere triumphant rolls,—They
stood and gazed,
“Can God be mocked?” they said. “Lord
is it well,
To leave this soul who hears Thy voice,
in Hell?”

I strove to answer them. They could not
hear.
My voice was soundless through my
happy tears.
God's voice filled all the place and far and
near
A tremor ran through high and nether
spheres.
I strove to answer them, “Lo, all is well ;
He does not leave the soul who loves, in
Hell !

“Lo, I am here because of evilness
That overcame my struggling soul on
earth.

Here in this place of tumult and distress
Must I await in hope my soul's rebirth.
Here louder, hour by hour, soundeth the
knell
Of fallen nature's power. Can such be
Hell?

“The debt of sin I pay. God cannot err;
Here or in highest Heaven, I am His
own,
To raise or to cast down. All souls that
were
On earth to reach His Heaven draw near
the throne
Through expiating that by which they fell.
I am content, though this indeed be
Hell !”

My whole soul thrilled with music and I
knew
God's will the while they heard. I bowed
my head.
The sweeping flames leapt nearer. They
withdrew,
Their questioning souls silenced and
comforted.
Beneath my feet I heard the demons yell,
And yet for me the place could not be
Hell.

What then is Heaven? To love! and that
alone.
How am I Heaven debarred since this I
know?
What though beside me souls in torment
groan,
Not knowing yet what only Love can
show?
Who has known Love may not his law repel,
For such an one, in truth, there is no
Hell !

THE PORTAL.

I SAID, "It is my will
That guards from Sin's invasion my
weak heart."

And thenceforth strove with every human
art
To strengthen will, but faltered as before.

God said, "It is thy thought,
That opes to Sin's advancement thy
heart's door.

Make clean thy thought, and then
forevermore
As one of us, lo, undismayed thou art!"

DUALITY.

O SOUL, companion in Life's mystery,
How many times since I began to be,
Thou hast grown weary of thy charge in
me !

And I, how many times I've wished that
thou

And I might part! We dare not each avow
How many times unto each other now.

How often would'st thou soar were I not
by,

To hinder all thy striving, even I,
To mar thy song triumphant with my cry.

The time draws near when thou mayst rise,
soul, freed

From this that dulls thy efforts with its
need

Of things to which thou giv'st such little
heed.

I shall not grieve at parting. Thou hast
made
By thy monitions and thy counsels staid,
Life only, that of which I am afraid.

It may be that when we together stand
For the last time, when God dissolves the
band
That holds us now, aye, on His borderland,

We may forgive each other all the good
That we have missed, the joys misunderstood,
The pain and grief of this long bondagehood!

O Soul! companion in Life's mystery,
Be patient yet a little while with me
Ere thou mayst rise and I may cease to be.

THE VOICE OF THE SPIRIT.

I AM that I am, and the ages shall change
me not.

Time, past and to come, is not before my
thought.

This I inhabit is subject to change and
death,

Upheld alone by the might of the Spirit's
breath!

I am that I am, and I leave as I found
them,

The appearances met in the forms that
surround them;

The rapture called Youth that knows no
second morrow,

The wisdom called Age, and the life breath
called Sorrow.

I am that I am, and the stretches of space
for me
Wait the fulfilling my manifold destiny.
Lo, the stars and the winds and the Law
that restrains them,
Are one and the same with the Spirit that
names them!

I am that I am, hindered, caught from
pursuing
My flight after Truth, to the moment's
undoing;
But the lodestar of Earth shall prove faint
in concealing,
What I seek, when is ripe the Sought's
utmost revealing!

I wait without hope, without fear, the
betrayment
Of the spell of the flesh, that conceals in
its raiment
This force which is I, for in waiting or
moving,
I am that I am, beyond question or proving.

OCCULTISM.

THE lowest depth that thou canst reach,
The grandest height thou canst attain,
Thy kind possess. When thou canst teach
Thy spirit this, the rest is plain.

Thence comes a helpfulness for all
That strive beside thee for the light.
They are thyself, whate'er befall,
Their sin is thine, their peace thy right.

PERCEPTION.

I MYSELF, through it all!

I, myself, consciously
Behold the mystery.
Swayed by the bad and good,
Throughout my humanhood,
Each must befall:
By each in turn possessed,
Each by my soul confessed,
Hearken Life's call!

I myself, through it all,
I myself, changelessly
Witness the things that be.
Witness Youth's passage fleet
Dauntless old Age to greet,
These are not all.
Joy, pain, hope, fear, are one ;
After their trial is done
Down the scales fall !

I myself am the whole!
What beside judges true
All Life can say or do?
What is it does not fear
Death's touch with duty near,
Flesh, sense, or soul?
Lo, the flesh bends and breaks;
Doubt the sense overtakes;
Sees, then, the Soul!

AB INITIO.

WHAT did I do in the past, I wonder,
 By Theosophy portioned as mine, of
 Fate?

'Neath what skies ran that conflict under?
 Came Death too soon? Did he tarry late?
 Was Love my shame, or Life's crowning
 glory?

Was Hate my captive, or owned my king?
 There is no page of the vanished story
 To be returned for my reckoning.

Filled joy or sorrow that far-off living?
 Was I of noble or low degree?
 Was I proud of strength that now Karma's
 giving
 Restricts so sadly the soul of me?
 Was I kind or cruel who now so lonely
 These questions ask? Am I opposite
 In the scale of Fate, or the outcome only
 Of former living because of it?

Fifteen hundred years since that living,
Fifteen hundred are yet to be,
Before this bundle of hopes and grieving
Becomes embodied again as me.
Ah! the little time for the Soul's completing,
And the dragging passage of centuries,
The moment's space of the earth-life
fleeting,
Ere is reached the last of its victories !

The creed were useful if surely tracing
The web of the net that now confines,
The justice plain of Life's present placing,
Soul's right of freedom for which it pines.
That knowledge waiting in far, cold spaces,
Between the living, is all unknown
While the conflict rages in earthly places,
To the struggling human it is not shown.

SOUL CRAVING.

IF there were but one, we say softly,
One other to know
The weight of the burden that living
To each soul doth show:
If there were but one to know fully
The days as they grow!

When God said, "Let light be," it shone
forth,
His mandate to greet,
Revealing all forms of creation,
The strong and the sweet;
Man only, the shade of his Maker,
Was made incomplete.

The flowers and the fruits and the seasons,
Ungifted with will,
Bloom on as at first, all Law's order
And grace to fulfill:
But the breath and the thought of the
human,
Bring grief with them still.

Lo! everything finished, completed,
Seen good of its kind,
Save the last of the thinking incarnate,
Man's spirit and mind,
Which ever, the walls of their dwelling
So hinder and bind.

Is it true that the old scriptures tell us,
This thing, that our God
Is jealous of progress, and renders
The way we have trod
So thorny because the true knowledge
Would lighten His rod?

Ah no, with the old days have vanished
The fear and the dread,
Of man's image made fiercer and larger,
And placed overhead
In some stronghold of justice, the tyrant
Men worshipped, is dead!

As a blind man to whom has been granted
The sight never known,
Might strive in the black of the midnight
To image the sun,
So we in the darkness of Nature
The vision have won.

And yet, till the dawn, we have only
A new, useless sense;
And still do the blind call the vision
An idle pretense,
And tread the ditch'd circle that never
Leads outward from thence.

From Life's incompleteness is proved
The only mistake,
That throughout the chain of creation
God's wisdom doth make;
Or else that a progress unending
Exists for its sake.

The soul growing stronger casts ever
A deepening shade,
It is this we see only and tremble
Within it afraid;
Yet the height and the breadth of the
substance
The shadow has made.

LOVE'S DWELLING HOUSE.

NOT built of reeds or leafy boughs,
Not hidden in far solitudes,
Is this the wondrous dwelling house
O'er which Love's gracious spirit broods:
But placed within the city's street,
Amid men's daily strife and care;
Humble it stands where grandeurs meet
Yet none the less Love's dwelling fair

And yet with awe our hearts are filled
Whene'er we enter at the door,
That mighty Love with us hath willed
To tarry here and share our store.
However humble it may seem,
Life's crowning gift it doth contain;
All else is but an empty dream,
And home itself a mocking name.

O narrow space, to hold so much!
O littleness, which yet is great!
O sacred place wherein we touch
The ruler of all life and Fate!
God grant the walls be firm and strong,
And that the door, 'though sorely tried,
May bar out hate and sin and wrong
Forever from our fireside.

We may not bar from out the door
Sad Sickness' face, whom all must greet;
And passing Grievs upon our floor
May loiter with unwelcome feet;
And Poverty may find a place
Herein to bide nor further roam;
But by God's ever living grace
All these are naught while this is Home!

For Love is here our Lord and King.
Love's very self with us doth dwell;
Whose touch makes light our suffering,
Whose voice is heard and all is well.
Through life we feel His presence near,
Through death we shall behold His face.
The kingdom of our God is here
Begun on earth within this place.

The Princess Beautiful.

THE PRINCESS BEAUTIFUL.

There once lived a princess who was so beautiful that her like did not live upon the earth. Nor ever had lived within man's memory. There was no charm of face or form which she did not possess. And the fame of her beauty spread far and wide until her father's kingdom was thronged with travelers who came to worship at the living shrine which held the perfection of that ideal beauty which men desire, but which, until her time, had never been encased in mortal mold.

Now this princess was very proud, and satisfied with her own perfection. She took no pleasure in the society of any other person. Being so beautiful, she took small notice of any of her father's subjects, and much preferred to gaze upon her own face to looking at the inferior countenances of those around her.

Nor was this state of things much changed when the time came for her to marry. As may be readily supposed, she had many suitors, but she was disdainful to each and all of them, and married the prince her father selected for her with so much gracious indifference of manner that the other princes were half consoled at their worse fortune and did not hate the prince so cordially as they might have done had she been able to manifest the least interest in him.

But as time went on there came at last a change, and to the Princess Beautiful was granted life's great and crowning gift of motherhood. At first she loved her little child because he too, like her, was beautiful; but gradually, day by day, she paid less attention to her own loveliness, and thought more and more about this tiny life that lived and rejoiced in life because of her. She grew also to care more for the father of her child and to take an interest in her subjects, who were so proud of her and of her little son, their prince. And so

the years slipped by until the boy had smiled at her on eight birthdays since the one when first she held him in her arms and knew the beginning of an interest in something more worthy than her old indifference and self-satisfaction.

And then one dreadful day the little prince disappeared from the palace, as completely as though the earth had closed over him, (as it does when one has accomplished his life's purpose and come to the beginning of its revealment.) They sought him long and earnestly. The old king and the prince and princess, the courtiers and all the people journeyed all over the kingdom, but there could be found no trace of him. After many months the people gradually gave up searching, and together with the king and prince mourned the boy as being hopelessly lost. But the Princess Beautiful could not live as she had done before the little prince was given to her, and she started out alone to search for him all through the world. Nor was this at all self-sacrificing on her part, because she

could not rest without such searching. She met with much kindness from many people, for the fame of her beauty and the great loss which had befallen her were widely known, but no one could tell her of her son. Until one day she met a strong, dark man (who was of the race of the immortals.) He smiled when she told him the reason of her journey. "I do not know where your son is," he said. "But I am related to a race who know much of the affairs of men, and I might direct you to some one who could tell you more of him. My name is Force. And men call me various names, some of which are Magnetism and Personal Charm. I draw from or grant unto each one with whom I come in contact. I have been very generous to you all your life. What will you give me if I will tell you something of your son?"

"O sir," the princess cried, "I will give you anything you desire in my kingdom! Great wealth and jewels, the most costly things in my possession, if you will only tell me how to find my little boy again.

You shall have anything you may ask for." The strong man laughed disdainfully. "I have no use for wealth," he said, "but that is not the only thing you have to offer. Will you return to me that subtle gift I gave you at your birth, and which draws to you the hearts of men, that which is your chief charm will you render up again to gain some tidings of your son?"

The princess hesitated. She thought what it would be like to live without the homage she had always been accustomed to. But her need was great, and she felt that the presence of her child would make up after all for the loss of what now seemed to her so valueless without him, and so she said to the dark figure, "I will," and closed her eyes and bowed her head while he touched her. Instantly she felt something which she had always thought was life itself depart from her, and a feeling of great cold possessed her, and henceforth when she met mankind a feeling of distrust and fear as to what they thought of her was constantly with the princess.

Now this was very bitter to one who had never felt such emotions before. She looked imploringly at Force, who said, "I am only one of many. I cannot tell you where your son is, but I can tell you the name of my sister, and she can tell you more if you will pay her price. Her name is Vanity and she is coming toward you through the city yonder."

The princess sought to question him more about her next guide, but when she dried her tears and turned to speak to him he had disappeared.

Now when the princess met Vanity she had no doubt as to her identity; a curious feeling of being related to her and yet of disliking her was strong within the mind of the princess as she approached and asked about her boy.

Now Vanity was herself beautiful. Her garments were fashioned of the cobwebs that are stretched upon the grass when first the sun rises. But there was about her an air of unreality which made the princess fear she could not be of much use to her in

her quest. Vanity smiled graciously, and said she could certainly aid the princess, although she could not bring her directly to her son. "But what will you give me for my services?" she said. "I am not mortal like yourself and only supersensuous things are of value to me. Will you give me the bloom upon your face, the light of your eyes that dazzles all beholders, the smoothness of your brow, the lustre and glory of your hair, your crown of womanhood? Will you go on from me displeasing to the sight and with the loss of all your beauty?"

This time the princess did not hesitate. "Yes, yes," she cried. "What are these things to me, when my child may be obtained by their loss? Take them all and, O! in mercy direct me where I may find him."

Vanity laughed softly to herself. "You need not further run the gauntlet," she declared, "since I have won from you all that the rest of our family might desire. You have only one thing more to lose. See

yonder in the wood that tall, veiled figure standing. She can bring you to your own again." And Vanity tripped away over the meadow, while the poor despoiled and saddened princess ran to the veiled figure and, falling at her feet, told all her sorrowful story, and besought her name and kindly offices. The figure raised the princess from the ground. "You have once known me," she said, "since I brought to you your son, who has been removed from you, as you shall yet know, in kindness, and who shall be restored if you are strong enough to pay the last price demanded of you?"

The figure placed her arms around the princess, and into her poor, hungry soul there crept a sense of such protecting love and shelter that she ceased to fear and tremble, and waited to hear what she must next give up to obtain her child again.

The figure paused a moment and then drew back her veil. The princess gazed in rapture at the wonderful face that beamed upon her gaze. The beautiful face, whose

beauty transcended what hers had been, because it held an element she had never known. "I was called beautiful," cried the princess, "but I never had the beauty which you show. O, highest and best, tell me your name, and, O! tell me, where is my little son?"

"Tell me first," said the figure, "will you pay the price? Who reads the name written on my forehead must do so with unselfish eyes. Who calls my name must do it with unselfish lips. Who knows my meaning and my purpose must learn through rendering up all trace of self. By such only am I understood. Gaze upon me, and if you are worthy you will see my name." The princess gazed, and as she looked, all the radiance of the figure's face gathered upon its forehead. Little sparkles of light glanced here and there, until finally the princess read in glowing letters of flame upon the serene and beautiful forehead the name of *Motherhood*. Then all grew dark around the princess and she sank away into a swoon. And when she

came to herself her little son was with her. Then hand in hand, through many lands and climes, they journeyed slowly back unto her father's kingdom.

There was great rejoicing at their return. And as the princess had gained a new and tender thoughtfulness through her misfortunes, she was more beloved than ever, although for very different reasons. As the years went by she grew like the veiled figure in the wood more every day. So that in the kingdom where she long lived and reigned, there came at last to be in men's sight all her olden charm with the something added which she had seen in the face of that figure. To all her subjects was she dearer than of yore. And when men speak of her, even to this day, she is still called, *The Princess Beautiful*.

THE FAR COUNTRY.

There once lived a man who felt constantly in his soul the longing to go to a far country.

In the home where his lot in life had been cast he had everything man could desire to make his life a happy one. He had pleasant gardens and a beautiful house filled with books and music and flowers. He had dear friends, a wife who loved him truly, and sweet little children to call him father.

He had great wealth and all that great wealth brings of culture and learning, but he had also with it all the longing for the far country. And one day when he could bear no longer the hunger and thirst of his spirit, he went away from all that he had known, and began a search for the place,

the intuition of which had rendered all his prosperous life so valueless to him. He left his home and friends, his loving wife and children, and went away alone to search for what he knew somewhere awaited him, the peace which passeth understanding of the far country.

Now when he did not return again his friends and wife and children mourned for him and missed him sadly from their midst. But, as time went on, they grew accustomed to their life without him, and continued to live as they had done and take pleasure in the beautiful house and gardens; although they remembered how much more beautiful it had all seemed before their dearest had gone away unto the far country.

Among the children of this man was one who was more like him than the others. He had been always glad to sit upon his father's knees and hear him talk about the far country, so he grieved sorely when his father went away alone to find this land. He alone took pleasure no

longer in his former games and plays nor in the amusements of his brothers and sisters. And one day he resolved to set forth, all ignorant as he was, in search of his father and the far country. He walked a long way; sometimes crying softly to himself, because he was such a little boy and felt so helpless in the search he had undertaken, and sometimes singing as the way seemed nearing the place he sought. His feet grew very tired and he was more often sorrowful than glad; but he never thought of turning back, or ceasing from his quest, because he also bore within his soul the longing for the far country.

The child met many persons as he journeyed. Some traveling in the direction he was going, but more walking toward him and away from what he hoped was the right direction. So he questioned them one by one, telling them where he was going, and that his father was only a little way ahead of him, and asking them if they had seen him, or if they were sure about the pathway leading to the far country.

Many of the people told the child that his search was useless; that he had better go back to his own place in the land where he was born, and that there was no such country to be found as he described. They had come toward him from all lands and directions and while they had heard vague rumors of such a place they had never met any one who had seen it, and that no one ever came back from the journey he had started on. "Go back now," they implored him, "and live the life that men may understand. Be happy and industrious and learned and give up this vain searching for what is so unsure; for this desire which feeds upon your soul brings no one happiness. Go back while yet you may and leave to those whose birthright it is the possession of the far country.

But the child pressed on until one day he met a beautiful woman whom he questioned, as he did each one he met, if she had heard of, or knew the way toward, the far country.

The woman looked upon the dusty, way-

worn child, and the bitterness of her soul, that showed through all her beauty, melted into pity as she answered him. "There is but one thing that can aid you, dear heart," she said, "in this or any other country, and that is gold. With gold one can buy culture and learning. These alone can guide you to the far country. I have never had the means, but I am sure there is but one way, that of learning, to find the pathway to the place you seek. Life without knowledge of the far country is bitterness when one has the desire for it. You are too poor and helpless for this quest and without gold it is useless for you to continue it."

"My father," said the child, "had these things of which you speak. He had books, and knowledge, and great wealth, but he left these things behind him and started forth, as I have done, all ignorant of the pathway. If he had surely known the way to go he would have taken me with him to find that home. And so I cannot feel that gold is the one thing needful."

The woman thought a little while on what the child had said. "I have always felt it was," she said, slowly. "I know no other means to find the way. I shall try yet longer to procure the knowledge by working hard for gold, then I shall study, and when I find the way I will return and overtake you, and we will go together then unto the far country."

The child took leave of her sadly, for he was loath to part from anyone who knew the longing for the place he sought.

One day he overtook a man journeying in the same direction he had chosen, and he asked him if he had seen his father, and if he knew anything about the longed-for land. The man was tall and strong. He had a noble face. He lifted the child from the ground and carried him in his arms as he talked. He had not seen the child's father, but he knew about the far country.

"There is only one way to find the entrance to it," he said, "and that is by loving some one better than one's own life. This great love lights the pathway; when two persons

feel this love for one another there is no longer any doubt. They are upon the pathway to the far country.

But you are such a little boy, you cannot understand this yet. You are too young to undertake this journey. Wait yet a few more years before you seek to find the way. There is much awaiting you in this land of joy and happiness before you need to seek the Blessed in the far country."

The child put his arms around the man's neck. He leaned his head back and looked into the man's eyes. "I am so glad I met you," he cried; "since you have found this great love and are upon the pathway! And are you sure this is the only way? And where is the one whom you love, whose answering love shall guide us all to the fair region of the far country?"

The man's face grew very sad, yet a great tenderness softened the sorrow and made it very beautiful.

"She whom I love," he said, "feels not for me this self-surrender. Had she done so,

we should be even now within the borders of the far country. Therefore is it that I am hindered in my journey, for while I understand Love is the only way, I am as yet ignorant why my love has thus far served me not as a help but a hindrance. Now while I understand this so imperfectly, I find that I progress but slowly toward the far country. But it will all be plain to me some day," he continued. "To those who feel the longing, soon or late the pathway will be shown that leads unto this country."

"I feel it!" said the child. "Then am I sure! O hasten your steps and seek with me more rapidly this pathway!"

But the man could not walk faster because he was yet so ignorant of the reason why his love had proved a source of sorrow instead of blessedness unto his soul.

And so the child, not having known this hindrance, parted from him and hurried on, while a great doubt rested on him like a cloud, that he should never find the far country.

As he ran on, the hills which had been on either side of him for many miles drew nearer to each other, and the sandy soil which had so tired and blistered his feet gave way unto a winding road with great rocks scattered here and there, around which he could climb with difficulty. But he hurried on, and presently he saw an old old man seated on one of the rocks.

The child again resumed his questioning, and heard with joy that his father had passed that way. The old man could not tell him how long ago, but he had seen and talked with him, and told him, as he did the boy, that he was in the right pathway and very near indeed unto the far country.

"You cannot miss the way now," said the old man. "Where these hills narrow and meet is the entrance to the country. I have never felt, myself, the desire to go on farther and explore this valley. My home is here. Those who wish may seek and find this country. I know it is just beyond, where the hills meet, for no one ever comes back to dispute this, and many

people pass this way all seeking this same place; but few indeed there are so young and so eager."

The child felt very sorry for the man who was content to live so near and yet outside the far country, and he told him so, then hurried on, till finally he reached the place where the great rocks met and he could go no farther.

He could see through a narrow space, but it was very dark and heavy mists hung all about the place. The child was very tired and cold. He lay down beside one of the rocks and wept. He thought of all he had left in the land where he had lived; of his playmates and his brothers and sisters; of his mother, who must now be grieving for him as she had grieved for his father. And as he thought of all these things he glanced above him at the rock and there he saw his father's name, and beneath the name were the words, "I have found here the only entrance to the far country." Then the child, not knowing what else to do, and despairing of any entrance through

the rocks to the country, called loudly to his father to return and take him to his place beside him. And thus calling and weeping, he fell asleep.

Now while he slept he saw the great rocks slowly open, and the mists surrounding them were lifted, and he looked into a more beautiful place than he had ever imagined in his fairest dreams of the far country. A soft, white light glowed everywhere as far as he could see, which changed not like the light of the sun, and which cast no shadows as the sunlight does. —All the shadows of the far country were clustered about the entrance to it, and within where this white light shone there was no change.

The child saw great multitudes of people walking about in groups; and upon the faces of those who spoke the same language there dwelt a great peace. They seemed to belong in bands of varying numbers, and he perceived that those who belonged to one another were never separated, and that they were all sure where

they belonged and were all satisfied. Now, as he looked, he saw one of the groups open and his father come out from among the people surrounding him. He came toward the child, and leaving the fair country he entered the shadows of the borderland. Nearer and nearer he came, while the mists gathered around him until the child could only see his face. That shone with the light that filled all the region he had left. That shone, the while his father stooped and raised the boy unto his breast and carried him back gently through the mists and shadows unto the place from whence he came.

And, when his father touched him, the child knew that he should hunger no more, neither thirst any more, because the longing in his soul was stilled now that he was come unto his own. And, in the place of the longing, a great love filled his soul, a love that was not for father or mother, or friends or brethren, but was greater than any love he had yet known, because it was the love of Love and not its symbols, even

the knowledge of Love that waits Love's own.

* * * * *

Now it happened that the old man thought about the child more than about the other travelers who had passed his way, and finally, when he did not return, he resolved to go and find the country the child had sought so earnestly. So he walked on and on through the valley until he reached the place where the rocks met, and there beside them he found the body of the child from which the spirit had departed. This he sorrowfully covered with earth and returned to his home in the valley.

"I have been mistaken," he said to the next traveler who inquired the way of him. "There is no far country, for I went as far as man can go and found only the valley of the shadow of Death. Stay here with me and rest from your searching. Beyond this valley there is nothingness."

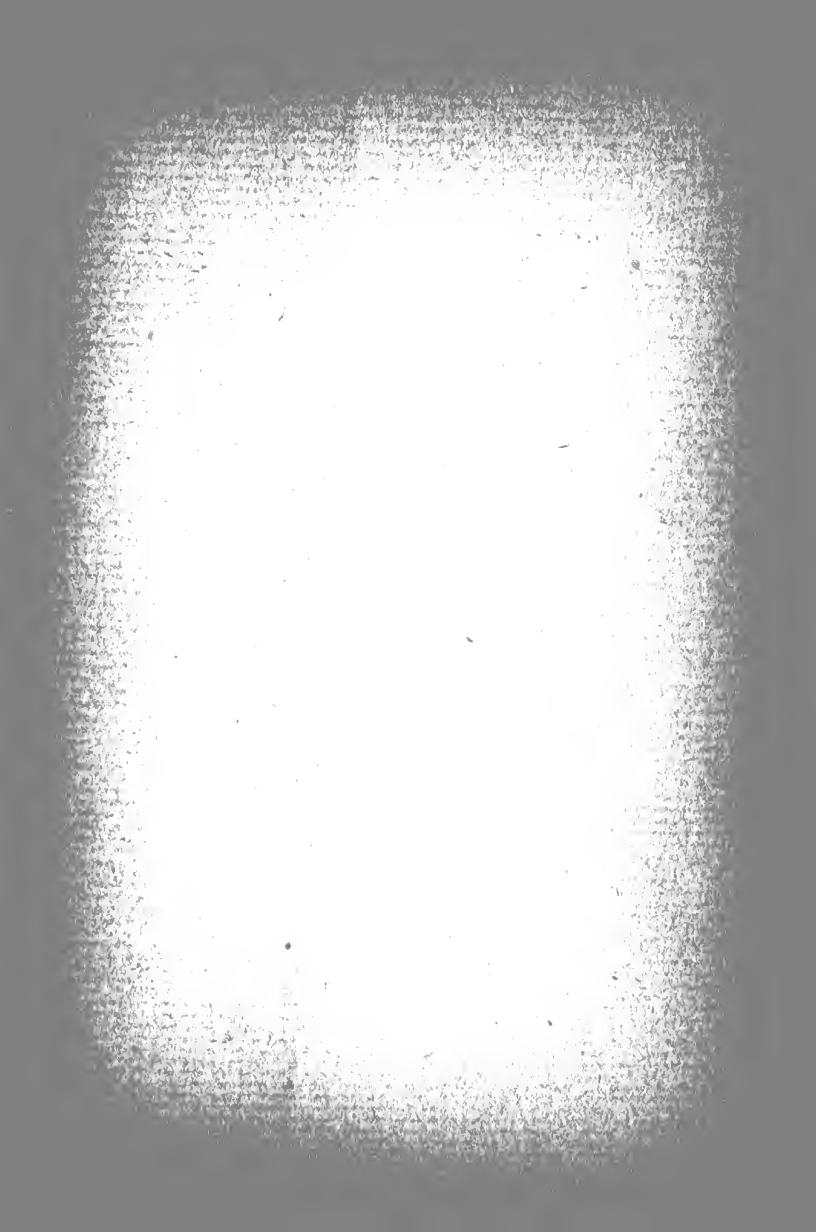
Then, after listening to the old man, one by one the travelers stayed and made for themselves homes among the rocks of the

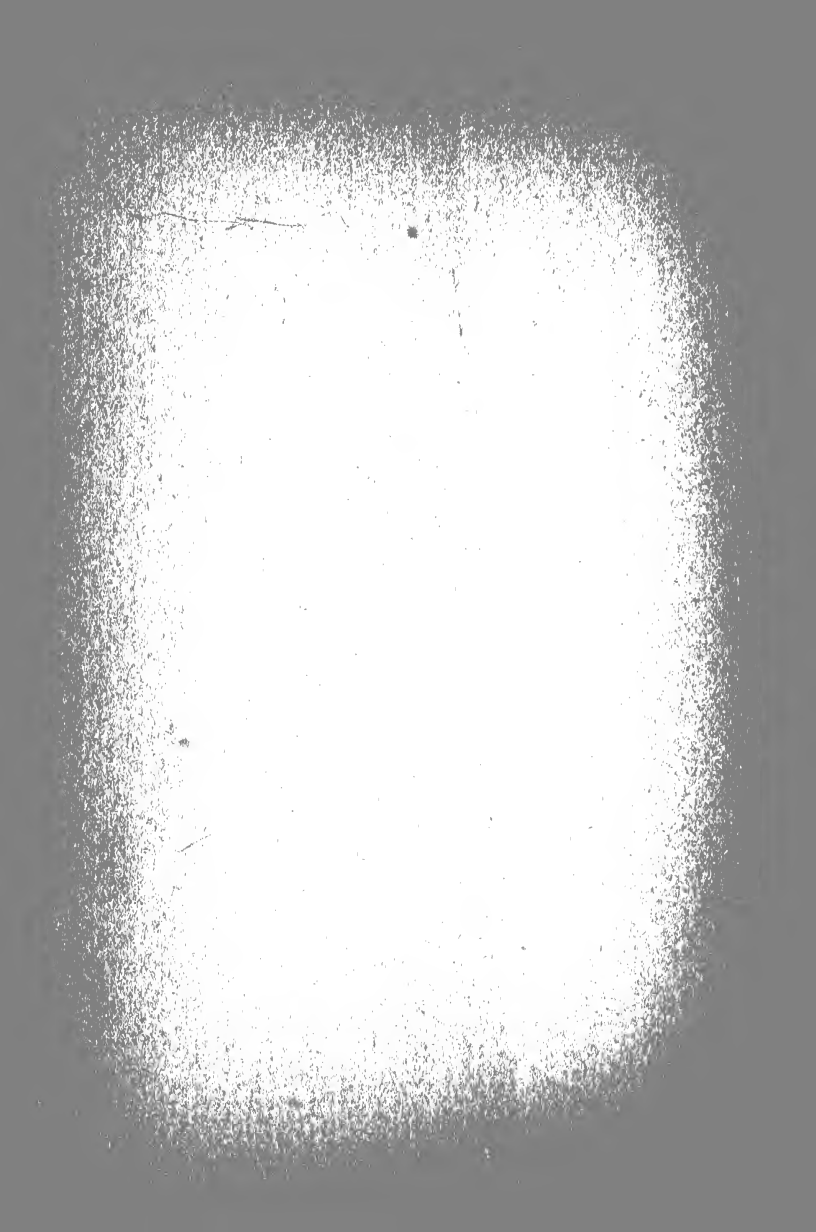
valley until there was founded a great city, and the city was called the City of Unbelief. And upon the dwellers in this city sometimes the sun shone, and sometimes the storms descended, and they knew hunger and cold and desolateness, and pride and joy—because while they loved each other, life even in the City of Unbelief could not be wholly desolate.

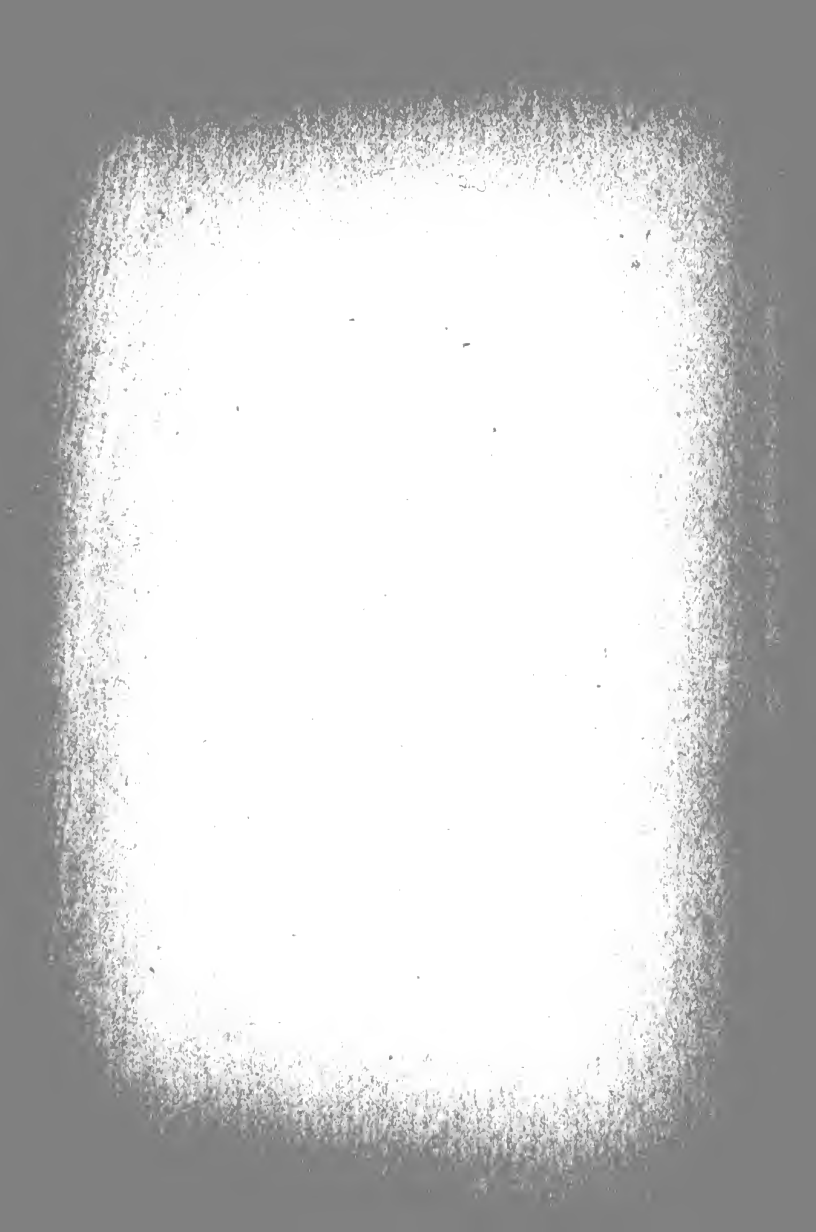
But to those who paused not in this city, nor gave up their faith in the far country, but persevered even unto the end of the valley, the rocky portals opened as they had done for the child, and as they entered in and reached each one his own appointed place, they left behind them in the darkness of the borderland the shadows of their former selves. And in each heart was stilled forevermore desire for more of life than they had reached.

For, in the place of Desire dwelt Love, seeking no more, but giving out from its own fullness, and thus satisfied. So for these travelers there was no more A Far Country, for Love became their home, and

Love, when once one understands its power,
is always very near.







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